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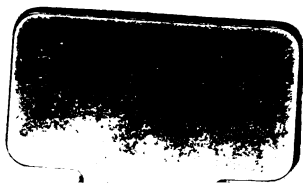
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WHAT IS ROMANISM?

Nos. I. & II.

I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.

II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES
GRANTED BY THE POPE.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Tracts are the first of a series intended to be issued on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published:—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—[continued].

IN examining the references to the Psalms the reader will bear in mind that our English version, which strictly follows the original Hebrew, differs from the Roman Catholic version in the numbering of the Psalms from the 9th to the 147th. The Roman Catholic version throws our 9th and 10th Psalms into one ; and thus our 11th becomes their 10th, our 12th their 11th, and so on till the 147th, which they divide into two, beginning their 147th at the 12th^d verse of ours. Between these limits, consequently, the reader, in referring to a passage quoted from the Roman Catholic version, must turn in our version to the Psalm next after that so quoted. Thus, if the quotation is taken from the 50th Psalm in the Roman Catholic version, the reader must refer to the 51st Psalm in ours.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

On the Supremacy of the Pope.

THE root and groundwork of much of the evil which for many centuries oppressed the nations of Christendom, (our own country not less than others,) was, in the assumption by Rome, of universal sovereignty over all the churches and all the kingdoms of the world, and of infallibility vested in her sovereign pontiff. The advocates of Roman supremacy claim the whole of Christ's fold as Rome's heritage. The Bishop of Rome they maintain to be the sole vicar of Christ, his vicegerent and representative on earth. Except in the communion of Rome, they deny that there is any spiritual safety. The doctrines sanctioned by the Pope are all put on an equality with the plainest revelations of the written word of God; for them all they claim the same certainty. Not content with spiritual dominion over the consciences of Christians, the Popes assume to themselves a divine right to dethrone kings, to release the subjects of any Government from their allegiance, and to shut out from the fold of Christ all who impede or refuse to second the Court of Rome in the exercise of these powers.

We in England have been so long accustomed to the protection which our constitution is strong enough to guarantee to us all against the attacks of any foreign tyranny, spiritual or temporal, that we not only feel easy as to any future interference on the part of Rome affecting our spiritual liberty and political independence, but we can scarcely, without an effort, conceive that our country ever was in reality exposed to any such dangers as we are now contemplating. We are incredulous as to the facts alleged—we suspect some mistake, either wilful or involuntary, as to the actual exercise of such enormous and monstrous

power by the Court of Rome; we consequently feel not so much need of proofs to show that the assumption of such power by any man, or any body of men, is unjustifiable; we want rather to be satisfied that such powers have been claimed and exercised—that the doctrine of the sovereignty and infallibility of the Pope is inherent in the papal system, and has been carried into execution in our own country; for whatever it may be in words, however monstrous in theory, if it never was accompanied by any outward and tangible act which might endanger the peace and threaten the liberties of our native land or our colonies, we might well let it pass as a dead letter.

To know then what in this point Rome has actually been in spirit and in practice, and what therefore, under a combination of favourable events, Rome may to our peril and cost be again, we need not have recourse to the early history of our people, when all professed one religion and all acknowledged allegiance to Rome (though many a dark page in that history abounds with evidence to the same point); nor need we rely on our own documentary annals, nor on the testimony of our accredited historians; abundant proof, evidence beyond gainsaying or suspicion, is contained to this very day in the records of Rome itself. We need look only to the bull or letters apostolic, as the Pope's decrees are called, by which Pope Pius the Fifth excommunicated and condemned our Queen Elizabeth, and as far as he could, deprived her of her throne; absolved her subjects from their oath of allegiance; and laid under the same curse and anathema all who dared to maintain her rights, or adhere to her as their sovereign. This indisputable proof of what Rome has shown herself to be, even since the reformation of religion in England, and what she might be again, if from morbid delicacy or carelessness we betray our trust, and cease to guard ourselves against the revival of such extravagant pretensions, is recorded in the second volume of the Roman Pontiff's decrees

called the Bullarium. It bears date April 27th, 1570, (that is in the fifth year of his pontificate, the twelfth year of Elizabeth's reign,) and is entitled "The Condemnation and Excommunication of Elizabeth Queen of England and of her Adherents, with the addition of other punishments, by Pope Pius the Fifth." Among other passages are the following:—

"He who reigns on high, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, delivered one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, without the pale of which is no salvation, to one only person in earth, namely, to the prince (or chief, *principi*) of the Apostles, to Peter, and to Peter's successor, the Roman Pontiff, to be governed in the plenitude of power. This one person he appointed prince (or chief) over all nations and all kingdoms, to pluck up, to destroy, to scatter abroad, to disperse, to plant, and to build, that he might in the unity of the Spirit keep together the faithful people, bound by the tie of mutual charity, and present them safe and unhurt to their Saviour. . . . But the number of impious men has so increased in power, that no place in the world is now left which they have not tried to corrupt by the worst doctrines: among others, Elizabeth, the servant of wickedness, the pretended Queen of England, adding her endeavours; with whom, as their asylum, the most hostile of all have found a refuge."

Then having enumerated her alleged crimes and impieties, that she had in a monstrous manner usurped to herself the place of supreme head and chief authority in the Church in all England, compelling her subjects to abjure the authority of the Roman Pontiff, and on their oath to acknowledge herself as sovereign in temporal and spiritual matters, and not suffering the Pope's nuncios to pass over into England to reason and remonstrate with her, the Pope proceeds:—

"We, by necessity driven to the arms of justice against her, cannot soothe our grief that we are led to punish one whose ancestors deserved so well of the

Christian commonwealth; wherefore upheld by the authority of him who willed to place us (though unequal to such a work) on this supreme throne of justice, we, of the plenitude of the Apostolic power, declare that the aforesaid Elizabeth, being a heretic and the favourer of heretics, and those who adhere to her in the matters aforesaid, have incurred the sentence of cursing; and are cut off from the unity of Christ's body; and moreover that she herself is deprived of her pretended right to the kingdom aforesaid, and also of all and every kind of dominion, dignity, and privilege; and likewise that the nobles, subjects, and people of the said kingdom, and all others who have in any way whatever sworn to her, are for ever absolved from such oath, and utterly from all obligation of dominion, fealty, and obedience, as we by authority of these presents do absolve them; and we deprive the same Elizabeth of her pretended right of the kingdom, and of all others aforesaid; and we charge and forbid all and singular the nobles, subjects, people, and others aforesaid, that they dare not obey her or her admonitions, commands, and laws. Whosoever shall act otherwise, them we bind by like sentence of cursing."

Now it pleased the King of Heaven, by whom earthly kings reign, that this anathema of the Sovereign Pontiff deposing the Queen of England should fall lifeless to the ground; but that was, because the adherents of Rome were too weak to carry his will and decree into execution. Our own history tells us of an earlier time when the Pope's malediction and interdict threw misery and mourning over the whole land; as this anathema of excommunication and dethronement would have done, had his supporters been sufficiently numerous and powerful. Rome has never abandoned the right to which that Pope laid claim; and as long as she usurps the title of mistress and queen of all nations, and clings to her commission to pull down and destroy, agree-

ably to the dictates of her own infallibility, so long our duty to God, to our Church, to our nation, and to our children's children, calls upon us as wise men to guard against the most remote return of such danger; to take provident measures that Rome shall hereafter gain no footing in England. Our firm resolve on this point must never lead us to judge harshly, or act unkindly, or entertain a wish to interfere with the consciences of individuals. To our fellow-subjects who acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, we must show all forbearance and charity, cheerfully conceding to them the same liberty of conscience which we claim as our own birthright. But let us take good care that the temptation be never laid before them of joining together, and with others, in upholding the aggressive authority of Rome against the liberties of this country. Doubtless for the overthrow of our Church, Atheists, Infidels, and various classes of professed Christians, all opposed to Rome, would gladly confederate with Rome itself.

Circumstances, how improbable soever now, may conspire to bring about such a combination: and necessity is laid upon us to be on our guard against the united efforts of such heterogeneous enemies, and in this view it is well for us never to speak of the supremacy claimed by the Pope as a harmless shadow. It may suit the purposes of the adherents of Rome in our own times to represent these precautions as the fruits of unworthy suspicions, groundless anticipations, the dreams of bigotry, fitted rather for benighted ages long passed away, than for the enlightened liberality of modern times. But our spiritual inheritance is too valuable in itself, and too dear to us for any fear of such hard names to drive us from its present defence, or from prospective measures for its future safety. It is the best treasure bequeathed to us by our forefathers, and with God's blessing we will deliver it down whole and entire to our children's children.

If we enquire into the origin of this claim of the Roman Pontiff to supreme and universal dominion over all the churches of the world, we find, by the most searching examination of the earliest authentic records, that the assumption of such dignity and power was never made on the part of Rome till after many centuries from the time of our Lord's death.

The primitive church never recognised such a claim, nor ever heard of it. There is no allusion to it in Scripture, nor in the remains of the most remote antiquity. It resulted as one of the many accumulated and various changes, which time and opportunities brought about in opposition to the primitive and apostolic system. Pagan Rome had reduced the nations of the world under its own iron sceptre; and the spiritual tyranny of papal Rome, gradually step by step, here a little and there a little, as favourable occasions offered, was built upon the same foundation. To those who would for themselves sift the evidence on which these assertions are made, may be recommended a work full of sound reasoning, extensive learning, and Christian charity, written by John Henry Hopkins, bishop of Vermont, in America, who proves these points beyond all doubt and gainsaying by a calm, and searching, and candid examination of those very fathers and writers of the early Christian Church, against whose testimony Rome cannot demur; for they are the very authors, whose authority she herself maintains in her canon law¹. The work, too, of Dr. Isaac Barrow, entitled '*A Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy*,' deserves the especial examination of all who feel anxious to make themselves masters of this subject.

¹ This work is entitled "*The Church of Rome in her primitive purity, compared with the Church of Rome at the present day, being a candid examination of her claims to universal dominion, addressed in the spirit of Christian kindness to the Roman Hierarchy.*" The first edition was published in America in the year 1837; the English edition appeared in 1839, with a valuable preface by the Rev. Henry Melvill.

WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

No. II.

ON
PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED
BY THE POPE.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

Pardons and Indulgences granted by the Pope.

IT must be remembered throughout, that the object before us is not to fasten on individuals of the Church of Rome doctrines or views which they disclaim; it is to endeavour, as honest and prudent men, to preserve our Church and nation from any return of those corruptions in doctrine and practice, from which the Reformation set us free. In pursuing this end, we cannot rest satisfied with the partial and rhetorical representation of Roman tenets and Roman practices, which is now sometimes made in their pulpits by preachers of that Church before mixed congregations, and is not unfrequently issued from the press. Especially at this time when the members of that Church are engaged with renewed ardour, and almost unprecedented zeal in making the religion of Rome palatable to our countrymen, and facilitating by every device the path of the proselyte, we must, in fairness, see what were the current practical doctrines which the Reformation banished from our Church; what our forefathers were taught, before England threw off the yoke of Rome; nay, what they were compelled to believe and acquiesce in, or else submit to the curse of excommunication. On the assumed supremacy of the Roman Pontiff we have spoken in another part; our thoughts are now drawn to the power assumed by the Pope,

and his priesthood under him, of granting pardons (or as they were familiarly called indulgences),—that is, a release, on certain conditions, from all, or a portion of the temporal punishment otherwise due to sin from God's justice,—the benefit, whatever it be, to be derived to the guilty soul from the ministration of the Roman hierarchy, either in this world, or after death has closed our time of probation.

On the subject of this chapter we may freely confess that, were not the very books themselves (not reprints, but the originals,) still in existence, we could scarcely have believed any testimony as to what they really contained. But (happily for the truth's sake) various copies of the books themselves, printed before the Reformation, are still in existence, preserved in our libraries, and accessible to all. We need not say, "Our ears have heard, our fathers tell;" our own eyes see what was then the doctrine of pardon and indulgences; what power the popes of Rome actually assumed over the dead as well as the living. No doubt the monstrous forms which these spiritual wickednesses had assumed, had so disgusted Christendom, and threatened so loudly and intelligibly to shake the very throne of Rome, that resolutions were passed in the Council of Trent to check the enormity of the evil. The council forbade that "wicked gains" [*pravos quæstus*] should be derived from the granting of indulgences; and directed the Bishops to inquire into other abuses, and report them to the Pope, "lest by the too great ease of obtaining indulgences, ecclesiastical discipline might be weakened."—Dec. 4, 1563. But the evil exists even to the present day, as we shall see before the close of this chapter, in its very same nature, though its most monstrous shapes are no longer visible among us in England. These are dark and melancholy subjects, and we will not dwell upon them at any unnecessary length; but we must not disguise the reality, or extenuate the greatness of the evil.

In our own times we have been told by preachers and writers of the Roman Church in our own country, that all that is meant by indulgences is, "a releasing, by the power of the keys, the debt of TEMPORAL¹ punishment which may remain due upon account of our sins, after the sins themselves, as to the guilt and eternal punishment, have been already remitted by repentance and confession²"—"that the priest may offer prayers for the souls in purgatory, and he can moreover offer the sacrifice of the mass—that all he can do is, to apply to the mercy of God in behalf of the dead; but that, like other men, he must remain uncertain as to the efficacy of his prayers—THAT HE CLAIMS NO AUTHORITY OR JURISDICTION OVER THE DEAD³."

But what was the belief and practice of the Roman church before the time of the Reformation, and what is it now? Do her spiritual powers claim no authority or jurisdiction over the dead? In good faith, do not her promises and declarations of pardon extend to the other world? And does she not claim jurisdiction over the souls in purgatory, so as to release them from their torments altogether, (in which case the pardon is called a Plenary Indulgence,) or remit such a portion of its bitter pains, and for so long a period and on such conditions, as her spiritual officers on earth shall determine?

First let us see what was the doctrine and what the practice just before the Reformation in England.

Leo the Tenth, who was Pope from 1513 to 1521,

¹ By TEMPORAL punishment we have generally understood punishment endured in this life; but when we read Roman Catholic definitions and explanations of pardons and indulgences, we shall be misled if we confine the term to this life; it extends to the bitter pains after death of souls in purgatory, though no mention be made of the next world.

² Chaloner, London; Jones, 1843, p. 57.

³ Sermon preached at Bradford, July 27, 1825, by Peter Augustus Baines, D.D., Bishop of Siga. London; Booker, 1826, p. 24: republished with the authority of the Bishops of the Church of Rome in England and Scotland, and its committee of Lay members, as No. 2, by the Society called The Catholic Institute of Great Britain.

states the doctrine, (at the same time denouncing excommunication against all who should deny it,) in a letter of instruction to his legate at the court of Maximilian. Having referred to the report that had reached him, that "some divines, even professing to follow Roman doctrine, had by preaching on indulgences which had been customarily granted by himself and his predecessors, Popes of Rome, in times beyond memory, imprinted errors on the hearts of many;" and having charged his legate to reprove and condemn those men, Leo proceeds:—

"And in order that hereafter no one may plead ignorance of the Roman doctrine about indulgences of this kind and their efficacy, or excuse himself by the pretext of such ignorance, or help himself by a feigned protest, but that they may be convicted and condemned as guilty of a notorious lie, we have thought it our duty to signify to you, by these presents, that the Roman church, which, as their mother, other churches are bound to follow, has taught by tradition that the Roman Pontiff, successor of the key-bearer, Peter; and vicar of Jesus Christ upon earth, by the power of the keys, (the office of which is to open, by removing in the faithful of Christ its impediments; that is to say, the guilt and punishment due for actual sins, the guilt being removed by means of the sacrament of penance, and the temporal punishment due according to Divine justice for actual sins being removed by ecclesiastical indulgence,) may for reasonable causes grant to the same faithful of Christ, who by the bond of charity are members of Christ, whether they be in this life or in purgatory, indulgences out of the superabundance of the merits of Christ and of the saints; and on the apostolic authority, by granting the indulgence as well for the living as for the dead, to dispense the treasure of the merits of Christ and the saints, he has been accustomed either to CONFER the indulgence itself by the way of absolution, or by the way of suffrage to TRANSFER it; and con-

sequently, that all, as well the living as the dead, who shall truly have obtained indulgences of this kind, are freed from so much temporal punishment, due according to Divine justice to their actual sins; as is equivalent to the indulgence granted and obtained; and that thus it must be held and taught by all under pain of the sentence of excommunication, from which (unless at the point of death) they cannot obtain the benefit of absolution, except from the Apostolic authority, we decree by the tenor of these same presents⁴."

This exposition of the doctrine and practice of indulgences by Leo X. seems to have been a sort of text-book; as we shall soon be reminded, down to this very day.

Much discussion has been entertained by Roman Catholic writers as to the precise distinction here made by Leo between the conferring of an indulgence by absolution and transferring it by suffrage. Cardinal Bellarmin⁵, whose dissertation on indulgences presents most startling views to those who have not before been acquainted with the real doctrine and practice of Rome, maintains this to be the distinction: The Pope, he says, grants an indulgence by absolution directly to the individual, when he remits the punishment and guilt to the sinner in this life; whereas, in the other case, he transfers from the Church's treasure of the merits of Christ and the saints so much as will satisfy the Divine justice, and procure, as an equivalent for those merits, either the total remission of the punishment, or such a proportion of it as the indulgence expressly grants. The Cardinal illustrates it by what he considers more familiar to his readers, but what would convey to our minds somewhat of the same idea of superstition and impious intrusion into the province of the Almighty. "Therefore," he says, "in the same manner as when any one gives alms, or fasts, or goes a pilgrimage to holy places for the sake of the dead,

⁴ Le Plat, vol. ii. p. 21, &c. Brit. Mus. 491, j.

⁵ Bellarmin, Paris, 1603, vol. iii. p. 1469.

he does not absolve the dead from the state of punishment, but offers that satisfaction for the dead so that, God accepting it, frees the dead from the debt of the punishment which they would have suffered; so the Pontiff does not absolve the souls of the dead, but offers to God out of the treasure as much as is required to liberate them; and God, accepting the satisfaction of another person communicating it to the souls of the dead, frees them from the state of punishment⁶."

Of the deplorable application, however, of this doctrine in actual practice in our own country we have too abundant testimony; indeed were that evidence found in the books of our Reformers, we should have questioned whether they had not been mistaken, whether we were not reading their inferences rather than the undoubted facts themselves; whether, however honestly they might have desired to give their testimony, they had not exaggerated the evil—nay, were not the awful subject of man's salvation ever before our eyes, the reality could scarcely, in many cases, do otherwise than excite ridicule.

In a work in English, entitled "The Hours of the most blessed Virgin Mary, according to the legitimate use of the Church of Salisbury," published at Paris in 1526, just five years after the death of Leo the Tenth, and only twenty-three years before our Book of Common Prayer was first published, we find such instances of the practical working of the doctrine declared by that Pope as would probably be pronounced unworthy inventions of the enemies of Rome, were they found in professed transcripts from the originals, or reported on the evidence of eye-witnesses, however respectable.

The volume abounds with forms of prayer to the Virgin, many of them prefaced by notifications of indulgences, startling indeed to us, but apparently familiar to our countrymen of that day, promised to

⁶ Paris, 1608, vol. iii. p. 489.

⁷ A copy may be examined in the British Museum.

those who duly repeat the prayers. These indulgences are granted by Popes and by Bishops, some of them dead centuries before that time. They guarantee remission of punishment for different spaces of time, varying from a few weeks to ninety thousand years: they undertake to warrant freedom from hell; they promise remission of punishment for deadly sins and for venial sins to the same person and on the same condition; they assure, according to the spiritual wants of the individual, both a commutation of the pains of eternal damnation for the pains of purgatory, and a change of the sufferings of purgatory into a full and free pardon.

The following specimens, a few selected from an over-abundant supply, will exemplify the several particulars specified in the above summary:—

1. “Laurence, Bishop of Assaven, hath granted forty days of pardon to all them that devoutly say this prayer in the worship of our blessed Lady, being penitent and truly confessed of all their sins. Oratio, Gaude Virgo, Mater Christi¹.”

This was Laurence Child, who was made Bishop of St. Asaph, 1382.

2. “To all them that be in a state of grace, that daily say devoutly this prayer before our blessed Lady of Pity, she will show them her blessed visage, and warn them the day and hour of death; and in their last end the angels of God shall yield their souls to heaven; and he² shall obtain five hundred years and so many Lents of pardon, granted by five holy Fathers, Popes of Rome¹.”

3. “Our holy Father, Sixtus IV.², Pope, hath granted to all them that devoutly say this prayer before the image of our Lady, the sum of XIM.

¹ Folio 35.

² “They.” The language no less than the printing is in many of these passages inaccurate, but it is thought better to quote each passage as it appears.

¹ Folio 38.

² Sixtus IV. had been then dead somewhat more than forty years.

(eleven thousand) years of pardon., Ave, sanctissima Maria, Mater Dei, Regina Coeli³.”

4. “To all them that before this image of Pity devoutly say five Pat. Nos. and five Aves and a Credo, piteously beholding these arms of Christ's passion, are granted XXXIIM. VII. hundred and LV. (thirty-two thousand seven hundred and fifty-five) years of pardon; and Sixtus IV., Pope of Rome, hath made the fourth and fifth prayer, and hath doubled his aforesaid pardon⁴.”

5. “Our holy Father, the Pope John XXII., hath granted to all them that devoutly say this prayer, after the elevation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 3000 days of pardon for deadly sins⁵.”

6. “Our holy Father, Pope Innocent III., hath granted to all them that say these three prayers following devoutly, remission of all their sins, confessed and contrite⁶.”

7. “These three prayers be written in the chapel of the Holy Cross, in Rome, otherwise called Sacellum Sanctæ Crucis Septem Romanorum; who that devoutly say them shall obtain XCM. (ninety thousand) years of pardon for deadly sins⁷, granted of our holy Father, John XXII., Pope of Rome⁸.”

8. “Who that devoutly beholdeth these arms of our Lord Jesus Christ shall obtain six thousand years of pardon of our holy Father Saint Peter, the first Pope of Rome, and of XXX. (thirty) other Popes of the Church of Rome, successors after him; and our holy Father, Pope John XXII., hath granted to all them, very contrite and truly confessed, that say these devout prayers following in the commemoration of the bitter passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, three thousand years of pardon for DEADLY sins, and other three thousand for VENIAL sins⁹.”

We will only add one more instance. The following

³ Folio 42.

⁶ Folio 63.

⁴ Folio 54.

⁸ Folio 66.

⁵ Folio 58.

⁹ Folio 68.

announcement accompanies a prayer of St. Bernard, "Who that devoutly, with a contrite heart, say this orison, if he be that day in a state of eternal damnation; then this eternal pain shall be changed him in temporal pain of purgatory; then if he hath deserved the pain of purgatory, it shall be forgotten and forgiven through the infinite mercy of God."

On this it may be observed, that Cardinal Bellarmine does not venture to express any doubt of his own as to the genuineness of those indulgences which extend over many thousands of years; and he tells us, moreover, that those who entertained such a doubt, on the ground that the Pope never granted indulgences to souls in purgatory for a longer period than would have been sufficient to expiate their guilt by penance, were utterly mistaken, for that agreeably to the canons some souls would not suffer enough punishment in purgatory in the course even of thousands of years: and he quotes the opinion that some must, if left to themselves, remain there in torments till the day of judgment. Still, according to Bellarmine and other modern writers, the Church of Rome professes to exercise no jurisdiction over souls condemned to eternal fire. They tell us, that however grievously a man may have sinned, and however bitterly he may be punished in the next world for his crimes, yet the pains of purgatory are the only sufferings which the indulgences of that Church are believed to shorten or mitigate. This theory is, indeed, inconsistent with the promise in "The Hours of the Virgin," that a man's pain of eternal damnation should be changed for him into temporal pain of purgatory. But when human corruptions are allowed to carry men away so far and so recklessly from Gospel truth, contradictions and inconsistencies afford little matter of surprise.

It is melancholy to reflect that such were the husks, or rather the deadly poisons, once supplied to our countrymen instead of the bread of life. But is it fair to fasten upon our Roman Catholic brethren now such

impious enormities? We desire to do no such thing; yet we do desire that our countrymen of the present day should become better acquainted than they have been with the nature of the evils from which the Reformation rescued us. But, as we have intimated above, though such gross blasphemies do not shock our eyes in England now, yet in theory and in practice the doctrine of indulgences, extending not only to this life but to the next, is still the doctrine of the Church of Rome, and is still operative, acted upon by the hierarchy and received by the laity; and of this we have abundant proof.

In the first place, the doctrine is maintained and the practice sanctioned by the decrees of the Council of Trent, and enforced by a condemnation and curse on all who should oppugn it.

In the second place, the doctrine is affirmed in the creed of Pope Pius IV., as one article of the Catholic faith, without which no one can be saved. To their entire belief in this creed all officers in the Church of Rome are bound by an oath on the Gospels; and their assent to it, without restriction or qualification, all proselytes on their admission into that Church are bound to testify.

In the third place, the Popes at the present day grant indulgences on certain stipulated conditions, extending expressly to purgatory.

And, lastly, the clergy and laity of the Roman church accept those indulgences, extending to the next world, as boons to be prized most highly for their eminent spiritual efficacy, and urge their fellow members to avail themselves of such means of salvation.

These four points it will be now incumbent on us to establish.

First, as to the Council of Trent. To what is declared in this council, the creed of Pope Pius IV. compels every Roman Catholic to assent; and not only himself to assent, and undoubtingly to receive and confess it, but at the same time in like manner to condemn, reject, and curse with anathemas, all that is

contrary thereto. In the twenty-fifth session of this council, Dec. 4, 1563, the decree runs in these words:—"Since the power of conferring indulgences was granted by Christ to the Church, and she has used a power of this kind, divinely delivered to herself, even in the most ancient times, this most holy synod teaches and instructs, that the use of indulgences, in the greatest degree salutary to Christian people, and approved by the authority of sacred councils, is to be retained; and condemns those with a curse, who either assert that they are useless, or deny that the power of granting them is in the Church."

The remainder of the decree (as we have before intimated) merely forbids "depraved gains" to be obtained for granting these indulgences, and leaves the rest of the abuses to be inquired into by the bishops, and reported to Rome. Not one single word is there as to the limiting an indulgence to the remission of temporal penances for sin in this world, or as to modifying the indulgence, that is, the remission of punishment in the world beyond the grave, within limits less awfully startling than those which the "Hours of the Virgin, according to the use of Salisbury," announced. Nor would the decrees of Trent have been consistent with the present practice, had they not sanctioned the doctrine, that the Church of Rome still possesses power, put into operation by some means or other of her own approval, to remit the pains of purgatory. The reality may not now be put before us in such broad characters, as it assumed in the early years of the sixteenth century; but the reality is in truth one and the self-same—less appalling and less palpably blasphemous, but not one whit less real, and much more deceitful and seducing.

Secondly,—The creed of Pope Pius, called by Roman Catholics "their profession of faith," thus expresses the two parts of the doctrine, of which whoever denies the one or the other, is condemned

with an anathema by the Council of Trent. "I affirm that the power of indulgences was by Christ left in the Church, and that the use of them is salutary to Christian people ¹."

Of the third and fourth points we have proof to the overflow. Roman Catholic books abound with evidence, that Pope Leo's doctrine is still maintained in theory, and acted upon practically, in all its parts—that the Pope grants indulgences, that is, remits the guilt and the temporal punishment due from Divine justice to actual sins—that some of these are plenary indulgences, that is, entire and complete remission of guilt and punishment; others are partial, that is, a remission of so much only of the guilt and punishment as is specified in each separate indulgence; that some of these indulgences relate to this life, others extend to the life beyond the grave. To establish these points we need not refer to distant times, or unwilling witnesses; our own days furnish too ample testimony.

Take, for example, the bull of Pope Leo XII. granting the last "grand jubilee," only one-and-twenty years ago, "celebrated at Rome in the course of the holy year 1825, and extended to the Universal Church in 1826." The entire doctrine of indulgences may be drawn from the language of this single document:—

"During this year, which we truly call the acceptable time, and the time of salvation," said this mortal man, "we are resolved, in virtue of the authority given to us by Heaven, fully to unlock that sacred treasure composed of the merits, sufferings, and virtues of Christ our Lord, and of his Virgin Mother, and of all the saints, WHICH THE AUTHOR OF HUMAN SALVATION HAS ENTRUSTED TO OUR DISPENSATION.

"Let the earth, therefore, hear the words of our mouth, and let the whole world joyfully hearken to the voice of the priestly trumpet, sounding forth to God's people the sacred jubilee. We proclaim that

¹ Chadoner, p. 52.

the year of atonement and pardon, of redemption and grace, of remission and indulgence, is arrived.

“We, with the assent of our venerable brethren, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, do, by the authority of Almighty God, and of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own, for the glory of God Himself, the exaltation of the Catholic Church, and the sanctification of all Christian people, ordain and publish the universal and most solemn jubilee, to commence in this holy city from the first Vespers of the Nativity, and to continue during the whole year 1825: during which year of jubilee WE MERCIFULLY GIVE AND GRANT in the Lord a plenary indulgence, remission, and pardon of all their sins to all the faithful of Christ of both sexes, truly penitent and confessing their sins, and receiving the Holy Communion, who shall devoutly visit the churches of blessed Peter and Paul, as also of St. John Lateran, and St. Mary Major, of this city, for thirty successive days.”

Pope Leo subsequently laments, that, “some persons covering themselves with sheep’s clothing, under the usual pretence of a more refined piety, were sowing among the people erroneous comments on this subject,” and he urges all patriarchs and bishops to explain clearly “the power of indulgences; what is their efficacy, not only in the remission of the canonical penance, but also of the temporal punishment due to the divine justice for past sins; and what succour is afforded OUT OF THIS HEAVENLY TREASURE, from the merits of Christ and his saints, to such as have DEPARTED REAL PENITENTS IN GOD’S LOVE, yet before they had duly satisfied, by fruits worthy of penance, for sin of commission and omission, and are NOW PURIFYING IN THE FIRE OF PURGATORY, that an entrance may be opened for them into their eternal country where nothing defiled is admitted².”

Four years after that jubilee, the Roman breviary, in four volumes, was printed at Norwich with the sanc-

² Laity’s Directory for 1825.—Keating and Brown.

tion of the pope, and by his permission adapted expressly for England; and what view of the Roman doctrine of indulgences do we find there? At the very opening of the breviary, between the calendar and the Psalms, we read this announcement,—“To those who devoutly recite the following prayer after performing service, Pope Leo X. hath forgiven the defects and faults in performing it which have been contracted by human frailty.” That pope died more than three centuries ago; and yet, in 1830, his promise of indulgence and pardon is recognized and put forward in the public offices and authorized rituals of the Church of Rome. To us there is something awfully revolting, in the thought of a mortal man prescribing for future ages, the conditions on which the frailties of human nature shall be pardoned; and of priests in the temple, even now, being taught to rely on such a promise of pardon, of whatever character it be, or whatever kind of punishment it may be supposed to remit. To believe that a priest can be put into a better condition by such a promise, does seem to be the very height of superstition.

But a work published at Derby only three years ago, entitled, “Manual of Devotion, for the use of the brethren and sisters of the confraternity of the Living Rosary of the blessed Virgin Mary, by Ambrose Lisle Phillips, Esq., of Grace Dieu Manor²,” renders all other evidence superfluous; the testimony borne by it is in every point complete. In the first place, page 22, this Roman Catholic writer copies a letter by the present pope, Gregory XVI., dated Rome, Feb. 2, 1832, of which the following are parts. The letter the pope addresses to “John F. Betemps, Canon of Lyons, and the Vicar of St. Roc, Paris.

“In the midst of that profound sorrow wherewith these evil days have overwhelmed our soul, we have found one subject of consolation, in that which we have heard touching a pious exercise, instituted to promote the devotion to the blessed Virgin Mary,

² Derby, 1843.

under the title of the Living Rosary. Most heartily do we concur with our authority, in order to help you in extending this pious institution; wherefore we open to you the heavenly treasures of holy indulgences, as you will find in the Apostolic Letter which we have directed to you, appended unto this. Continue, then, dear children, encouraged by this spiritual assistance, which we have drawn forth for you from the inexhaustible treasury of God.

“To this letter is appended an apostolic brief, wherein the holy father is pleased to grant the following indulgences to all the faithful in Christ of both sexes, who shall be inscribed in the guild, or confraternity of the Living Rosary.

“1. Plenary indulgence, receiving the Holy Communion after a devout confession on the first festival day after their admission into the guild.

“2. All the indulgences hitherto annexed to the recital of the Rosary.

“3. Indulgences of a hundred days as often as the members shall recite their appointed decade of the Rosary on working days.

“4. Indulgences of seven years and seven quadragenæ, [Lents,] as often as they shall recite their aforesaid decades on Sundays and holydays, as well those of obligation, as on those which are no longer of obligation, and every day during the octaves of Christmas, Easter, Whit-Sunday, Corpus Christi, the Assumption, the Nativity, and the Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

“5. Plenary indulgence on Christmas-day [&c.], as well as on all the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as noticed in the last calendars of the holy Roman Church, and moreover on the third Sunday of every month.”

On this letter and brief of the Pope, the writer makes a long comment, exhorting all to secure to their own souls the benefit of these indulgences. Among other remarks we read:—

"These plenary indulgences are applicable to the holy souls in purgatory." . . . "Indulgences are the remission of the temporal punishments which remain due to sin, even after God has forgiven us in the Sacrament of penance the eternal punishment due to it. . . . In this Sacrament the grace is not so abundant as in that of Baptism: it remits indeed the eternal punishments of hell, if we receive it in due dispositions; but it leaves uncanceled the debt of temporal punishment which God still requires for the repenting sinner, after his justification, to undergo. If this debt be not fully discharged in this life, the Church teaches that we must suffer it in the next in the place of departed spirits. But she also teaches, that the payment of this debt is not so easy a matter in the next life as in this. . . . Venial sins will add fuel to the flames, that have been already kindled by the debt due to our mortal sins forgiven as to their eternal punishment. How true then are the words of the holy Church, that indulgences are most profitable unto Christian souls. And why? because they apply to our souls the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ and of the saints, (who are members of his mystical body, with whom also we have communion,) and so enable us more easily to cancel the debt of temporal punishment, which God in his infinite wisdom has still left upon us, even after He has reinstated us in his grace, and remitted the eternal punishment due to our sins by the Sacramental absolution of the Church. If, then, we desire to make our calling and election sure, let us diligently have recourse to this second branch of the power of the keys, which Christ our Lord hath left to his Church. I mean, let us never lose an opportunity of gaining holy indulgences."

Such is the present state of indulgences: the Pope granting them both plenary, and in part; and the Romanists in England receiving them as boons; acknowledging their efficacy both in this world, and in the life of the world to come.

To us who are accustomed to appeal to the Holy Scriptures as the rule of faith, there is something most awfully impious in this doctrine and practice, even under its least offensive form. In the thought that a mortal man should assume at his pleasure and on his own conditions, the right, the power on earth, of mitigating the punishment appointed by the eternal Judge to be endured in the next world; in one case suspending it for days or years, or myriads of years—in another remitting it altogether, and freeing the souls of the departed from all the pangs and sufferings, which but for that mortal man's indulgence they must for ages have undergone, there is something so abhorrent from our very first principles of reason, and our notions of God and of man, and so utterly at variance with the whole tenour of revelation, that our difficulty is not to point out its evils, but to believe that such a doctrine is indeed and in reality practically in existence, believed, and acted upon.

If it be said that the Pope does not assume this right and power, but that it was assigned to him by the providence of God, revealed in his written word, and testified by the primitive Church, we declare ourselves unable to find one single trace or shadow of it either in the Holy Scriptures, or in the records of the primitive ages. Pope Leo X., indeed, boldly affirms that indulgences had been customarily granted by his predecessors, Popes of Rome as St. Peter's successors, time out of mind: but for any grounds on which to rest that assertion, we search the records of the Christian Church in vain. Indeed, the Romanist writers do not allege any evidence of the doctrine and practice of indulgences from early ages; and many of them freely confess that they were comparatively modern in their origin. There is, we conceive, no point in pagan or sacred history more clearly established than this, that for the doctrine and practice of indulgences there is no ground whatever in the Gospel or the primitive Church.

Many proofs of this may be adduced; but we need no more than the confession of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. This Romanist Bishop, when he wrote his first arguments against Luther, seems to have thought it impossible for any true Catholic AT THAT TIME (whatever might have been the creed of Christendom in former ages) to doubt the existence of purgatory. And he thus argues, "Those who believe in purgatory must agree to indulgences. In former ages they had no purgatory; therefore, they did not seek indulgences; we have purgatory, therefore we must have indulgences." But let his own words convey his sentiments:—"Many, perhaps, are induced not to place so much confidence in these indulgences, because their use in the Church seems to have been somewhat recent, and to be found exceedingly late among Christians. I answer, that it is not a settled point by whom they began to be delivered [or from what time they began to be delivered down]. There was, however, some use of them, AS THEY SAY, among the most ancient Romans, as we are given to understand even from the very frequent stations⁴ in the city. But they even say that Gregory the First granted some in his time. Nor is it otherwise than clear to every one, that by the talents of men in after times many points, as well out of the Gospel as from the other Scriptures, are now drawn out more clearly and understood more perspicuously than they were formerly. Either, forsooth, because the ice was not yet broken through by the ancients, and their age did not suffice for weighing to a nicety the whole sea of Scriptures; or because even in the very ample field of the Scriptures, after the reapers, although most careful, it will be allowed to glean some ears left hitherto untouched. For there are still in the Gospels very many places yet very obscure, which I doubt not will be made

⁴ By "stations" was meant, places where the processions made a halt, and prayers were offered, confessions heard, &c.

more clear to posterity. Why should we despair of this, whereas for this very reason has the Gospel been delivered down, that it might be thoroughly and exactly understood by us? Since then the love of Christ to his Church continues not less strong than it was formerly, of whose power too there is no diminution; and since the Holy Spirit is the perpetual guardian and keeper of the same Church, whose gifts flow as uninterruptedly and copiously as they did from the beginning, who can doubt but that, whatever points remain in the Gospel unknown, the clear intellects of those who are to come will illustrate? However, as we were saying, there are many points on which no question was raised in the primitive Church, which, nevertheless, by the diligence of subsequent men, when a doubt arose, have been made clear. No orthodox person, at all events (to return to our point), now doubts whether there be a purgatory, of which, at that time, among those ancients no mention was made at all, or as rarely as possible. Nay, by the Greeks even to this very day, it is not believed that there is a purgatory. Let who will read the commentaries of the ancient Greeks, and he will meet with no word, as I think, or as rarely as possible, of purgatory. But not even did all at once the Latins, but by little and little, receive the truth of this matter. Nor was the belief either of purgatory, or of indulgence, so necessary in the primitive Church as it is now. For at that time charity was so ardent, that individuals were most ready to die for Christ. Crimes were rare, and those which occurred were visited with great and severe vengeance by the canons. But now a good part of the people would rather strip themselves of Christianity than submit to the rigour of the canons, so that, not without a very great dispensation of the Holy Spirit, has it come to pass, that after the revolutions of so many years, belief in purgatory and the use of indulgences have generally been received by the orthodox. As long as there was no care about purgatory, no one sought indulgences; for from

that depends all the estimation of an indulgence. If you take away purgatory, for what will there be any use of indulgences? for we should not need them at all, if there were no purgatory. Seeing then that purgatory was for a considerable time unknown, and then step by step, partly from revelations, partly from the Scriptures, was believed, and so at length generally the belief of it was most widely received by the orthodox Church, we can most easily understand some reason for indulgences. Since then purgatory was at so late a period received by the universal Church, who can now wonder about indulgences, that in the beginning of the nascent Church there was no use of them? Indulgences, therefore, began after there had been for some considerable time trepidation about the torments of purgatory. For, at that time, it is credible that the holy fathers more attentively studied by what means they could best consult for the safety of their flocks against those torments, especially for those whose age would not allow of their completing the penance appointed by the canons." The writer then proceeds to say, that those fathers, seeing that the Pope, as Peter's successor, has so much power, conceived that he might fairly be believed to have the power of releasing from the pains of purgatory; hence the origin of indulgences! He finishes the section in these words—"Nor would I deny that the abuse of them may take place on both sides. For both the person who grants them, may give them with some sinister view; and at the same time he who receives them, may make them a handle for living more carelessly."

After such a declaration, by one of the most learned champions of the Romish Church, we need not examine those passages of primitive writers which are now strangely perverted and pressed, to give countenance to some part or other of these innovations. The very earliest time to which Bishop Fisher would refer is the age of Gregory the First, who was not Pope till the very end of the sixth century; and even that he does not

venture to give as his own opinion, or to confirm by any evidence—all he can write is, “As they say.”

And if from the ancient Church we turn to the Holy Scriptures, we cannot find one single passage to give the slightest shadow or colour of authority to the practice or the belief of indulgences. The Pope claims the right on his being the successor of St. Peter, and on the authority of the keys as given to that Apostle by our Lord. But whatever that authority involved, it had certainly nothing in common with indulgences; and whatever it was, it was given equally to all the Apostles. The words by which He explains the figurative expression of delivering the keys to Peter He repeats to all the Apostles:—“Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever YE shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever YE shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus unto THEM again, Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins YE remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins YE retain, they are retained.”

And when we read written as with a sunbeam,—“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;” “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” we turn from the doctrine and practice of indulgences as an unscriptural error, robbing the atoning sacrifice of Christ’s death of its infinite fullness, and denying its power of saving to the utter-

* Matt. xvi. 18, 19.

† Matt. xviii. 18.

‡ John xx. 20.

most those who come to the Father through Him. The idea of a treasure of merits, consisting of the mingled merits of Christ and his saints, seems to us nothing short of impiety. To maintain that a mortal man has the disposal of that treasure to make amends and satisfaction to God's eternal justice for the unexpiated guilt of departed souls, and liquidate that portion of their debt of punishment which they have not yet paid by sufferings, we cannot but regard as a presumption most offensive to the Almighty, and most abhorrent to our first principles of religion.

We throw ourselves on the mere mercy of God in Christ Jesus, assured that if we sincerely repent, and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel, He will absolve us from all our sins, and receive us to Himself as souls ransomed from sin, and death, and hell, by His blood, and cleansed from all our corruptions by the Holy Spirit. We endeavour, in reliance upon his grace, to work out our own salvation; considering the purity of God and our own frailty, we engage in that work with fear and trembling; but knowing that He will work in us by a power not our own, and will give us, in answer to earnest prayer, the strength, and guidance, and protection of His Holy Spirit, we go on our way rejoicing, in sure and certain hope of victory and of heaven. We feel no trepidation as to the torments of purgatory, but are sure that they are the presumptuous fabrication of men; and regarding the interval between our death and the resurrection, even were it a myriad of ages, in comparison with eternity, to be like the twinkling of an eye, with humble confidence we trust that, when the time of our departure is come, we shall fall asleep in Jesus, to be raised in God's good time to possess our full consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his everlasting glory.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. III.

ON THE
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND
ANGELS.



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God, and is opposed to the honour of the one Mediator of God and man, Jesus Christ, or that it is folly by voice or mentally to supplicate those who reign in heaven, hold impious sentiments.

“Those who affirm that . . . the shrines of the saints are in vain frequented for the purpose of obtaining their succour, are altogether to be condemned, as the Church has long ago condemned them, and now also condemns them.”

There are several points of view in which the expressions of this decree are remarkable; among others, their elastic character forces itself upon our notice; for whilst they may be so widely expanded as to justify the practice of praying for blessings temporal and spiritual directly from the saints themselves, they may be so contracted as not palpably to contradict those who assert that the Church of Rome never offers to a saint any other petition than merely and simply a request, that the saint would, by his or her prayers, intercede with God for the worshippers. And conformably with this latitude we find the most astonishing discrepancies between the representations of their faith and conduct made by different Roman Catholic writers; and whilst this discrepancy reminds us especially of the rule which we have prescribed to ourselves throughout these papers, of not seeking to charge individual members of the Roman Church with doctrines and practices which they disavow, it enforces on us with increased obligation the necessity of cautioning the members of our own communion against those errors in belief and religious worship, which however softened down by metaphysical distinctions, are inseparably connected with such corruptions as we are led in the present paper to lay open. But let us first see what views of the invocation of saints are put before us by those Romanist writers who wish to make their doctrines as little repulsive as may be to members of our communion, and then how the doctrine and practice show themselves elsewhere.

In the sermon preached at the consecration of the Roman Catholic chapel at Bradford, July 27, 1825, by P. A. Baines, D.D., bishop of Siga, the doctrine and practice are thus stated: "But do we not worship and pray to the saints? We worship no creature whatever, and therefore not the saints. But at least we pray to them. Yes, my Christian brethren, just as St. Paul prayed to his own converts, or I pray to you. I say to you, and with all sincerity I say it, Pray for me, my brethren; obtain for me from God those blessings which I may myself be unable or unworthy to obtain. I say the same to the blessed mother of Jesus Christ, to St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, or any other of those holy persons whose acknowledged sanctity has procured for them, through the grace and merits of Christ, the friendship of God and the happiness of heaven. Surely there is nothing wrong or unreasonable in this. The earthly trials of those holy persons are past, the veil of mortality is removed from their eyes, they behold God face to face, and enjoy without reserve his friendship and his love. May I not reasonably hope that their prayers will be more efficacious than my own, or those of my friends? Under this persuasion I say to them as I just now said to you, "Holy Mary, holy Peter, holy Paul, pray for us!" The end of this section Bishop Baines closes with this awful imprecation on his own soul, "Anathema to myself, if the doctrine I have here explained to you is not the true and universally received doctrine of the Catholic Church!"

To this exposition we must again revert. At present we only say, that however wide the difference, however groundless the analogy between one of us mortals asking a fellow mortal on earth to pray for us on the one hand, and on the other our suppliantly invoking the spirits in the unseen world to pray for us—between our requesting, by word of mouth or by letter, a living friend to join his prayers with our own at the throne of grace, and, on the other hand, in the

attitude of prayer, on our knees, with uplifted hands, in private or in the house of prayer in the very midst of the worship of Almighty God, (all marking it as a religious act of prayer,) our imploring an unseen spirit to aid us; however great a difficulty we may find in reconciling this declaration of Bishop Baines and his knowledge with the real state of facts both of doctrine and practice as we find them; we do not for a moment suspect him of willingly misleading his audience, which consisted of members of his own Church, and of the Church of England, and of Dissenters. His sermon was preached in 1825; in 1843 we have a very different view of the doctrine forced upon us in a letter dated "St. Mary's College, Oscott, Octave of Corpus Christi". It is written "to a friend at Oxford by a late member of the University," who represents himself as a convert from the Church of England to the Church of Rome. This writer, on the subject of the Invocation of Saints, uses these expressions: "To prevent all quibbling, I shall explain all the points in the above argument which are liable to be misunderstood or cavilled at. By 'Invocation of Saints,' I do not mean the mere 'Ora pro nobis,' (the mere 'Pray for us,') but the *direct* asking from the saints things which God alone can bestow."

Whether this view or the representation of Dr. Baines be the more approved now in England it is needless for us to inquire, who believe both of them to be contrary to the faith and practice of the Primitive Church, and inconsistent with the Scriptural principle of one God, the only object of prayer, and one Mediator between that God and our fallen race. But we must now inquire what were the doctrines and practices from which the Reformation rescued our country in this respect, and what are the con-

¹ The title-page is "The Character of the Rev. W. Palmer, M.A., of Worcester College, as a Controversialist, particularly with reference to his charge against the Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman, of quoting as genuine works of the fathers spurious and heretical productions, &c. London: Dolman, New Bond Street, 1843."

² These italics are in the original.

clusions to be drawn by honest minds from the authorized formularies now in use in the Church of Rome, and what are practically the prevalent devotional exercises of its members. We reserve the worship of the blessed Virgin Mary for a separate consideration.

We cannot, however, help observing on the unsatisfactory language in which, on this subject, no less than on Indulgences, Dr. Baines conveys to a mixed congregation, unacquainted with Roman doctrines, this article of their faith, "I say the same 'Pray for me' to the blessed mother of Jesus Christ, to St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, or any other of those holy persons whose ACKNOWLEDGED SANCTITY has procured for them, through the grace and merits of Christ, the friendship of God and the happiness of heaven." By whom does he mean that their sanctity is acknowledged? If God be meant as acknowledging it, how can we be certified of the judgment of God as to the sanctity of any departed mortal? If man be meant, how can man know the heart of a fellow mortal? And, in any case, how can we know whether (on the Romanist principles, so far as Bishop Baines explains them) the soul departed is in a condition to be prayed for, or to be prayed to? If the soul is in purgatory, according to the Roman theory, it requires the prayers of the faithful on earth for its release from suffering; if it is already in heaven, not only may it pray for souls on earth, but those souls may suppliantly implore its assistance and good offices. This alternative can be decided by no mortal except through immediate revelation; but here the Church of Rome has attempted to meet this difficulty by investing the Pope with the power of canonizing such departed souls as he adjudges to be saints in heaven; and in this act he is held to be infallible. Cardinal Bellarmine insists upon this as an indisputable dogma; though, when he proceeds to enumerate his arguments, the first would seem not to partake of a seriousness corresponding with the character of the subject. "In the first place, was the

Pope ever proved to be mistaken in this act?" In Dr. Baines's exposition of the doctrine, then, there is much to be understood beyond what is expressed. By "acknowledged sanctity" is meant "sanctity acknowledged by the Pope and the College;" and to the words "has procured for them the friendship of God and the happiness of heaven," must be added, "in the judgment of the Roman pontiff." Thus the soul of a departed Christian might be prayed for, and masses said in his behalf to release him from purgatory through this year, and if the act of canonization were passed by the Pope at the end of the year, from that day and hour he would become, not the subject, but the object of prayer; he would not be prayed for, but prayed to. Thus in the record of the canonization of Alphonsus Liguori, we are told that immediately on the completion of the act, before leaving the church, the official offered to him the prayer "Pray for us." In contrast with this, the apostolic injunction forces itself upon us, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God³."

With regard to the awful extent to which the worship of saints had grown before the Reformation, we have a mass of evidence on record which must make us thankful that our Church suffers us to pray only to God, and to seek his mercies only through the merits and intercession of his blessed Son our Saviour. We cannot consistently with the teaching of his Gospel and of his Church make any distinction between a Mediator of Redemption and a Mediator of Intercession, such as some of our Roman Catholic brethren would persuade us to adopt. Holy Scripture countenances no such distinction. There we find the two offices of redemption and mediation joined in Christ, and in Him alone: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins⁴." And

³ 1 Cor. iv. 5.

⁴ 1 John ii. 1, 2.

the same Saviour who is declared to have "obtained by his own blood eternal redemption for us," is announced to us also as the Mediator of Intercession: "Wherefore he is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them⁵." We are thankful, therefore, that our Church has restored to us this only sound and true doctrine—**ONE GOD and ONE MEDIATOR.**

But how was it before this sound doctrine was restored? One service familiar to the people of our country at that time, is of itself enough, (and we select it out of very many,) to enable us to answer that question—the Service of Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, whom some have denounced as a rebel; of whose condemnation as a sinner, or admission into heaven, the masters of Paris are reported to have disputed forty-eight years after his death; and whom the Church of Rome canonized as a saint. Into the questions of his religious and moral excellence or delinquency our present inquiry does not lead us; for our argument, we may consider him to be correctly represented by his most ardent admirers. The whole Service, consisting of biographical legends, and praises of Thomas à Becket, and declarations of the Divine vengeance upon his murderers, and prayers to him, may be read in a work on the Catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge⁶. In the ninth lesson of the first Service we find this announcement: "At the cry of this blood the earth was moved and trembled. Nay, moreover, the powers of the heavens were moved; so that, as if for the avenging of innocent blood, nation rose against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; nay, a kingdom was divided against itself; and terrors from heaven and great signs took place. Yet from the first period of his martyrdom the martyr began to shine forth with miracles, restoring sight to the blind, walking to the lame, hearing to the deaf, language to

⁵ Heb. ix. 12.

⁶ Primitive Worship, p. 201.

the dumb; afterwards cleansing the lepers, making the paralytic sound, healing the dropsy and all kinds of incurable diseases; restoring the dead to life, in a wonderful manner commanding the devils and all the elements; he also put forth his hand to unwonted and unheard-of signs of his own power, for persons deprived of their eyes merited by his merits to obtain new members," &c.

Among the addresses to the Almighty for mercy through the merits and mediation of Thomas, and to Thomas for his own spiritual aid, we find the following:—

"O Christ Jesus, BY THE WOUNDS OF THOMAS, loosen the sins which bind us, lest the enemy, the world, or the works of the flesh, bear us captive to hell. BY THEE, O Thomas, let the right hand of God embrace us. . . . Happy place, happy church, in which the memory of Thomas lives! Happy the land which gave the prelate! Happy the land which supported him in exile! Happy father, succour us miserable, that we may be happy and joined with those above." "O good Jesus, BY THE MERITS OF THOMAS, forgive us our debts. Visit the house, the gate, the grave, and raise us from the threefold death. What has been lost by act, or in mind, or use, restore with thy wonted pity. Pray for us, O blessed Thomas!

"The grain falls, and gives birth to an abundance of corn.

"The alabaster-box is broken, and the odour of the ointment is powerful.

"The whole world vies in love to the martyr whose wonderful signs strike all with astonishment.

"The water for Thomas five times changing colour, once was turned into milk, four times into blood.

"At the shrine of Thomas four times the light came down, and, to the glory of the saint, kindled the wax tapers.

"DO THOU, BY THE BLOOD OF THOMAS WHICH HE SHED FOR THEE, CAUSE US, O CHRIST, TO ASCEND whither Thomas has ascended.

“Extend succour to us, O Thomas, guide those who stand; raise up those that fall. Correet our morals, actions, life; and guide us in the way of peace.”

This Service (which, as a writer[†] contemporary with our Reformation tells us, used “full solemnly to be sung in the temples”) suggests many serious reflections as to the state of religious worship in our country before the Reformation. It is indeed lamentable to find such legends substituted for the reading of the word of God. Of these lessons there are no less than fifteen. But even more lamentable is the impression which this Service must make on minds of ordinary power and cultivation. Its natural, and, as we conceive, unavoidable tendency, is to withdraw the worshippers from contemplating Christ, the only Saviour, and to fix their thoughts on the powers, the glory, the merits, and mediation of a fellow-creature. It is often said, that the worshippers will look beyond the martyr, and trace the blessings to Christ as the primary cause, and will think of the merits of Thomas as efficacious only through the merits of their Saviour; that in their religious addresses to Thomas, though they ask directly of him mercies which God alone can bestow, they will only ask him to pray for them. But can this be so? Is it reasonable to expect such a result? Does not experience prove the futility of such an expectation? Is not such a service rather a snare to the conscience? at all events, a most dangerous experiment? Let us look at it in one or two of its particular points. Does not the ascription of miracles to Thomas à Becket—does not the very form of enumerating those miracles tend much to exalt the servant to an equality with Him who alone doeth great wonders? For the reader will observe a marked and lamentable absence of any immediate reference of those miracles to God, or ascription of glory to Him. So, too, many passages in this Service tend to withdraw the minds of the wor-

[†] Bacon, 1564, v. 183.

shippers from an implicit and exclusive dependence on the merits of Christ alone, and to tempt them to mingle, at all events, the merits of Thomas, in the work of grace and salvation, with the merits of Christ's death and precious blood.

We request the reader to reconsider the language already quoted from the Service of Thomas à Becket, and to compare it with the passages of that Word of life and of death to which at last, if we are Christians, our appeal must be made, and from which there is no appeal.

**THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SERVICE
OF THOMAS À BECKET.**

"O Christ Jesus, BY THE WOUNDS OF THOMAS, loosen the sins which bind us."

"O blessed Jesus, BY THE MERITS OF THOMAS, forgive us our debts, raise us from the threefold death."

"Do Thou, O Christ, BY THE FLOOD OF THOMAS, which he shed for Thee, cause us to ascend whither Thomas has ascended."

"For thy sake, O Thomas, let the right hand of God embrace us."

"Send help to us, O Thomas."

"Guide thou those who stand."

"Raise up those who fall."

THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed ⁸."

"He who spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ⁹?"

"The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin ¹."

"By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God ²."

"Lord, be thou my helper ³."

"Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel ⁴."

"The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that are bowed down ⁵."

⁸ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

¹ 1 John i. 7.

³ Psalm xxx. 10.

⁴ Psalm lxxiii. 24.

⁹ Rom. viii. 32.

² Phil. iv. 6.

⁵ Psalm cxlv. 14.

“Correct our morals, actions, and life.”

“Guide us unto the way of peace.”

“Create in me a clean heart, O God⁶.”

“Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means⁷.”

Compare also the language in which ascriptions of praise are couched to this departed mortal with the words which Holy Scripture appropriates to the eternal Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, the only wise God, our Saviour.

ASCRIPTIONS OF PRAISE TO
THOMAS À BECKET.

“Hail, Thomas, thou Rod of justice!”

“The brightness of the world.”

“The strength of the Church. The love of the people. The delight of the clergy.”

“Hail, glorious guardian of the flock. Save those who rejoice in thy glory.”

HOLY SCRIPTURE WHEN SPEAK-
ING OF GOD.

“There shall come a rod out of the stem of Jesse⁸.” “Ye denied the Holy One and the Just⁹.”

“I am the Light of the world¹.” “The brightness of his glory².”

“I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me³.” “Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it⁴.” “I will love thee, O Lord, my strength⁵.” “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity⁶.” “Delight thou in the Lord⁷.”

“Our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep⁸.” “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, come and save us⁹.” “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord¹⁰.”

How can these prayers and praises be regarded as merely variations of the expression “Pray for us?” Try the real, genuine nature of these prayers and praises by this general test—change only the name, and substitute the holy name of the supreme God and Saviour for the name of Thomas à Becket, and then

⁶ Psalm li. 10.

⁹ Acts iii. 14.

³ Phil. iv. 13.

⁶ Eph. vi. 24.

⁹ Psalm xxx. 1, 2.

⁷ 2 Thess. iii. 16.

¹ John viii. 12.

⁴ Eph. v. 25.

⁷ Psalm xxxvii. 4.

⁸ Isa. xi. 1.

² Heb. i. 3.

⁵ Psalm xviii. 1.

⁸ Heb. xiii. 20.

¹⁰ 1 Cor. i. 31.

judge whether such devotions offered to the departed spirit of a fellow-creature, can be safe or justifiable.

ROMAN SERVICE.

"To Thomas all things bow and are obedient—plagues, diseases, death, and devils, fire, air, land, and sea:

"Thomas fills the world with glory.

"To Thomas the world offers obeisance.

"Thomas shone forth with miracles.

"Do thou, O Lord, by the blood of Thomas, cause us to ascend whither he, Thomas, hath ascended.

"O Thomas! send us help. Guide these who stand. Raise up those who fall. Correct our morals, actions, and life; and guide us into the way of peace.

"O Thomas! thou Rod of Justice! the Brightness of the World! the Strength of the Church! the Lover of the People! the Delight of the Clergy! Glorious Guardian of the flock! save Thou those who delight in thy glory."

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

"To God all things bow and are obedient—plagues, diseases, death, and devils, fire, air, land, and sea.

"God fills the world with glory.

"To God the world offers obeisance.

"The Lord Jesus shone forth with miracles.

"Do thou, O Lord, by the blood of our Saviour Christ, cause us to ascend whither he our Saviour hath ascended.

"O God! send us help. Guide those who stand. Raise up those who fall. Correct our morals, actions, and life; and guide us into the way of peace.

"O Lord Jesus! thou Rod of Justice! the Brightness of the World! the Strength of the Church! the Lover of the People! the Delight of the Clergy! Glorious Guardian of the flock! save Thou those who delight in thy glory."

Can that worship become the disciples of the Gospel and the cross which addresses such prayers and such praises to the spirit of a mortal man? Every prayer and every form of praise here used in honour of Thomas à Becket it would well become Christians to offer to the eternal Giver of all good, trusting for acceptance solely and exclusively to the mediation of Christ Jesus our Lord, and pleading only the merits of his most precious blood. We are, however, bound to confess, though in the ministrations authorized and appointed by the Church of Rome in public worship at the present day we are not shocked by such startling language, yet that in principle, in spirit, and in fact,

we can discover no substantial difference between this Service of Thomas of Canterbury and the Service which all persons in communion with the Church of Rome are under an obligation to use even at this very hour. Far, very far, are we from charging with idolatry our fellow-creatures who declare that they offer Divine worship only to the supreme Lord of heaven and earth; but we know and feel that, according to the standard of Christian truth and the rule of pure worship of Almighty God, which the Scriptures and primitive antiquity compel us to adopt, we should stain our own souls with the guilt of idolatry, and with the sin of relying on other merits than Christ's, were we ourselves to join in those services.

Invocation of Saints.—Present worship in the Church of Rome.

IN our remarks on the Service of Thomas à Becket, whom our Roman Catholic brethren call St. Thomas of Canterbury, we observed, that although the same startling expressions and words do not now exist in the formularies of Rome, yet, that we are unable to find any real and essential difference in the objectionable points, between that service and the devotions at present prescribed and employed by that Church. We might, leaving more minute and subordinate distinctions, enumerate four grievous errors in that service, for which we shall not be long in discovering real parallels in the authorized books of the Church of Rome now.

First, prayer is offered to God through the mediation and intercession of the saints, instead of the mediation and intercession of Christ alone; and the merits of the saints are pleaded with God for the highest spiritual blessings.

Secondly, prayer is offered to the saints, asking for their prayers at the throne of grace, agreeably to the representation of Bishop Baines.

Thirdly, prayer is offered to the saints, imploring directly at their hands gifts spiritual and temporal, which God alone can bestow; agreeably to the representation made in the letter from Oscott above referred to.

Fourthly, praises are offered to them, and ascriptions of glory, such as Christians should offer only to the one supreme God.

The following instances are all taken from the present authorized and enjoined Liturgy of Rome.

1. First, prayer is offered to the Almighty, through the mediation and intercession of the saints; and the Almighty is supplicated to grant to the worshippers the benefits of the advocacy and intercession of particular saints by name¹.

“We beseech Thee, Almighty God, that he whose feast we are about to celebrate, may implore thy aid for us: that he may be for us a perpetual intercessor.—A. 545. 551. “We beseech Thee, O Lord, let the intercession of the blessed Anthony, the abbot, commend us, that what we cannot effect by our own merits, we may obtain by his patronage, through the Lord.”—H. 490.

On this point it may be wise to compare two prayers of the Romish Church, both offered to Almighty God, and both seeking at his hand the self-same recovery from the misery into which sin had plunged the worshippers; but the one prayer imploring that mercy through the intercession of his dear and only Son, the other pleading the advocacy of a mortal man.

“We beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who among so many adversities from our own infirmity fail, the passion of thy only begotten Son interceding for us may revive.”—V. 243.

“O God, who hast granted the rewards of eternal blessedness to the soul of thy servant Gregory, grant that we who are pressed down by the weight of our sins, may by his prayers with Thee be raised up.”—V. 480.

¹ These references are made chiefly to the Roman Breviary, published under the Pope's sanction and patronage at Norwich, in the year 1830, by the *Rev. F. C. Husenbeth*, expressly adapted to the use of England. It is in four volumes, corresponding with the quarters of the year. A. stands for autumn, Æ. for summer, H. for winter, V. for

Thus do the authorized services of Rome teach Christians to seek at God's hand a supply of their wants, in return for the prayers and intercession of their departed fellow mortals, of whose present condition neither reason nor revelation gives them any assurance. But there is another form of the same class of prayers which contradicts our judgment and shocks our feelings more even than the form of which we have here given instances. We are admonished by the written word of God, and the earliest worship of the Church of Christ, that by joining in such a form of prayer, we should do wrong to our Saviour, and unthankfully disparage his inestimable merits, and the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction of his omnipotent atonement. The form we mean consists of prayers to God, which supplicate that our present and future good may be advanced by the MERITS of DEPARTED MORTALS; that by THEIR MERITS our sins may be forgiven, and our salvation secured; that BY THEIR MERITS our souls may be made fit for celestial joys, and be finally admitted into heaven. Of these prayers the Roman Breviary forces upon us a great variety of examples, some exceeding others in their apparent forgetfulness of the merits of the only Saviour, and consequently far more shocking to the reason and affections of us, who hold it a point of conscience to make the merits of Christ, exclusively of any other to be joined with them, the only ground of a believer's acceptance with God.

"O God, who didst adorn the blessed Pontiff Nicholas with unnumbered miracles, grant, we beseech Thee, that by his merits and prayers we may be set free from the fires of hell, through," &c.—H. 436.

Another instance occurs in the Collect for the 19th March, in which the Church of Rome teaches her members to pray to God for the benefit of Joseph's intercession, and to hope for succour from his merits.

"We beseech Thee, O Lord, that we may be succoured by the merits of the husband of thy most holy

mother, so that what we cannot obtain by our own power may be granted to us by his intercession."—V. 486.

Under this head we will add only one more instance, in which the Church of Rome directs her people to offer this prayer to Christ,

"O God, whose right hand raised the blessed Peter when walking on the waves so that he did not sink, and rescued from the depth of the sea his fellow apostle Paul, for the third time suffering shipwreck; mercifully hear us, and grant that BY THE MERITS OF BOTH we may obtain the glory of eternity."—H. 149.

Now suppose for a moment it had been intended in any one prayer, to exclude negatively the merits of Christ from the great work of our salvation, and to limit our hopes of everlasting glory to the merits of St. Peter and St. Paul, could the object have been more effectually secured than by this prayer? No reference is here made, even by allusion, to the merits of Christ's death,—none to his merits as our Redeemer, none to his merits as our Intercessor. The worshipper is led to approach the throne of grace only with the merits of the two apostles on his tongue. If those who offer this prayer, hope for acceptance through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of his merits, that hope is neither suggested nor fostered by their prayer. The truth as it is in Jesus would compel us, in addressing Him as the Saviour of the world, to think of the merits neither of Peter nor of Paul, neither of angel nor spirit. Instead of praying to Him that we may obtain the glories of eternity for their merits, true faith in Christ would compel us to throw ourselves implicitly on his all-perfect and omnipotent merit alone, and implore the blessing for his own mercy's sake. If we receive the whole truth, can it be otherwise than a disparagement of his merits to plead with Him the merits of one whom the Saviour Himself rebuked with as severe a sentence as ever fell from his lips; and of another who after his conversion, when speaking of the salvation wrought by Christ, in profound humility confesses himself to be a chief of those sin-

ners for whom Christ died?¹ We feel, indeed, a sure and certain hope that these two fellow-creatures, once sinners, but by God's grace afterwards saints, have found mercy with God, and will, through Christ, live with Christ for ever; but for us to pray for the same mercy at his hand, for the sake of their merits, is repugnant to the first principles of our Christian faith. When we think of merits for which to plead for mercy, we can think of Christ's, and of Christ's alone.

2. The second class of invocation in our division, comprehends those addresses to the saints which implore them to pray for the worshippers. These occur so frequently in every part of the authorized worship of Rome, that we need not lengthen the present section by enumerating many instances. One example both of the preceding class, and of this in juxtaposition, occurs in the case of Ambrose, bishop of Milan. The Church of Rome has availed herself of his pious labours, and has introduced into her public worship many of the hymns usually ascribed to him. It had been well for Christian truth and apostolic worship had she followed his example in addressing her invocations to no one but our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier.

“O God, who didst assign to thy people the blessed Ambrose, as a minister of eternal salvation, grant, we beseech Thee, that we may deserve to have him as our intercessor in heaven, whom we had as a teacher of life upon earth!”

“O thou most excellent teacher, the light of the Holy Church! O blessed Ambrose, thou lover of the divine law, deprecate the Son of God for us!”

In the “*Litany of the Saints*” more than fifty different persons are enumerated by name, and are implored to pray and intercede for those who join in it; among them are Raphael, Gervasius, Protasius, and Mary Magdalene; whilst in the *Litany for the recommendation of the soul of the sick and dying*, the names of Abel and Abraham are specified.

Under this head we will cite only one more example.

¹ Matt. xvi. 23.

² 1 Tim. i. 15.

Indeed, it may be doubted whether the hymn would be more properly classed under this head or reserved for the next, since it seems to partake of the nature of each. It supplicates the martyr to obtain spiritual blessings by his prayers, and yet addresses him as the power who is to grant those blessings. It implores him, indeed, to liberate us by the love of Christ; but so should we implore the eternal Father of mercies Himself. We think it, however, the safe course to cite it under this head, as merely a prayer to St. Stephen to pray for us. But it may be well to derive from it a lesson on this point, how easily the transition is made from one false step to a worse; and how infinitely wiser and safer it is to avoid evil in its very lowest and least objectionable character.

"Martyr of God! [or unconquered martyr] who, by following the only Son of the Father, triumphest over thy conquered enemies, and as conqueror enjoyest heavenly things, wash out by the office of thy prayer our guilt, driving away the contagion of evil. The bands of thy hallowed body are already loosed; loose thou us from the bands of the world, by the love of the Son of God [or by the gift of God] most high⁴."—H. 237.

3. But thirdly, the Roman Church (we say this with the declaration of Bishop Baines, &c. on the one side, and the Letter from Oscott, &c. on the other, before us) by no means limits herself to this one kind of invocation. Prayers are addressed to saints imploring them to hear, and as of themselves to grant, the prayers of the faithful on earth, and to release them from the bands of sin, without any allusion to the intercession of those saints. Thus, in the Gradual on St. Michael's day, this prayer is offered to him:—

"O holy Michael, O Archangel, defend us in battle, that we perish not in the dreadful judgment!"

When we read the invocation made to St. Peter on the 18th of January, called the Anniversary of the Chair of St. Peter at Rome, the words of our blessed

⁴ In the above hymn the words included in brackets are the read-

Lord Himself and of his beloved apostle seem to rise up in judgment and to condemn that prayer.

"Now, O good shepherd, merciful Peter, accept the prayers of us who supplicate, and loose the bands of our sins by the power committed unto thee, by which thou shuttest heaven against all by a word, and openest it '!"—H. 497.

It may be well to place the several members of this address to Peter side by side with the language of Holy Scripture, and then ask, can such a form of devotion be safe?

"Merciful Peter, O thou good shepherd,"

"Accept the prayers of us who supplicate:"

"And loose the bands of our sins, by the power committed to thee:"

"By which thou shuttest heaven against all by a word, and openest it."

"Jesus saith, I am the good Shepherd⁶."

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do⁷." "That whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you⁸."

"The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sins⁹."

"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth¹." "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death²."

ings adopted in the last edition of the Roman Breviary, printed in England (1830); and it may be well here to observe, that we find various readings in the hymns, as they are now printed for the use of Roman Catholics in different countries. In some instances the changes are curious and striking. Grancolas, in his historical commentary on the Roman Breviary (Venice, 1734, p. 84), furnishes us with interesting information as to the chief cause of this diversity. Pope Urban VIII., who was Pontiff from 1623 to 1644, himself a man of letters and a poet, took measures for the emendation of the hymns in the Roman Breviary. His taste was offended by the many defects in their metrical composition, and upwards of 950 faults in metre are said to have been corrected. This gave Urban occasion to say, that the Fathers had begun rather than completed the hymns. According to Grancolas, many complained of these changes, alleging that primitive simplicity had been sacrificed to poetry. "Accessit Latinitas, recessit pietas." The verse was neater, but the pious feeling was chilled.

⁶ This hymn has undergone many changes since its first adoption into the Roman Breviary.

⁶ John x. 14.

⁷ 1 John i. 7.

⁸ John xiv. 13.

⁹ Rev. iii. 7.

⁶ John xv. 16.

⁷ Rev. i. 18.

The same unsatisfactory associations must be excited in the minds of all who ground their faith and worship on the word of God, by the following supplications to various saints on St. John's day. The reader cannot fail to observe how peculiarly fitting would the expressions of this hymn be in an address to our God and only Saviour, and our Judge; whereas, when they are used in a devotional prayer to our fellow-creatures, the words of inspiration condemn every sentence.

"Let the world exult with joy, let the heaven resound with praise; the earth and stars sing together the glory of the Apostles. Ye Judges of the Ages, and true Lights of the world, we implore with the prayers of our hearts, hear the voices of your suppliants. Ye who, by a word, shut the temples of heaven and loose its bars, COMMAND US, who are guilty, TO BE RELEASED FROM OUR SINS, we pray. Ye, of whose commands sickness and health are immediately sensible, heal our languid minds, increase virtues in us, so that when Christ the Judge shall return at the end of the world, he may grant us to be partakers of eternal joy. Jesus, to Thee be glory, who wast born of a virgin, with the Father, and the Benign Spirit, through eternal ages. Amen."—H. 243.

4. On the subject of our present examination we will only quote one more case—the prayers and praises offered in the Roman Ritual to Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, which will supply us with a sufficient proof of the fourth error above specified. Of Joseph mention is made by name in the Gospel, just before and just after the birth of Christ, as an upright, merciful man, to whom God on three several occasions, by the medium of a dream, made a direct revelation of his will with reference to the incarnate Saviour. Again, on the holy family visiting Jerusalem, when our Lord was twelve years old, Mary, in her remonstrance with her Son, speaks thus: "Why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." On which not one word was uttered by

our Saviour enabling us to form an opinion as to his own will with regard to Joseph. He seems purposely to have withdrawn their thoughts from his earthly connexion with them, and to have raised their minds to his unearthly, his heavenly and eternal origin. "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" After this time, though the sacred writings, either historical, doctrinal, or prophetical, embrace at the lowest calculation a period of fourscore years, no allusion is made to Joseph as still living, nor to his memory as one already dead. And yet not only does Rome teach her members to pray to God for the benefits of his merits and intercession, but offers prayers to Joseph himself, as well to obtain his prayer, as to procure from him "gifts and graces which God alone can bestow," and offering him praises and honours which are due only to God our Saviour.

Of course, in the *Litany of the Saints*, "St. Joseph pray for us," is one of the suffrages; but on his day (March 19), we find three hymns addressed to him, full of lamentable superstition, assigning to him a share at least in the work of our salvation, and solemnly stating as a truth what, whether true or false, rests on a groundless legend, namely, that our blessed Lord and Mary watched by him at his death; ascribing also, as we have intimated, that honour and praise to Joseph which the Church, from its earliest days, was wont to offer to God alone. The following are extracts from these hymns:—

First Hymn—"Let the companies of heaven celebrate thee, O Joseph! Thee let all the choirs of Christian people resound; who, bright in merits, wast joined in chaste covenant with the renowned Virgin. Others their pious death consecrates after death, and glory awaits those who deserve the palm. Thou, when alive, equal to those above, more blessed by wondrous lot, enjoyedst God. O Trinity most high, spare us who pray; grant us to reach Heaven [to scale the stars] BY THE MERITS OF JOSEPH, that, at the last, we may perpetually offer thee a grateful song."—V. 485.

Second Hymn—"O Joseph, the glory of those in Heaven, and the sure hope of our life, and the safeguard of the world, benignly ACCEPT THE PRAISES WHICH WE joyfully sing to THEE. Perpetual praise to the most high Trinity, who, granting to thee honours on high, give to us, BY THY MERITS, the joys of a blessed life."—V. 486.

Third Hymn—"He whom we the faithful worship with joy, whose exalted triumphs we celebrate, Joseph on this day obtained the joys of eternal life. O, too happy! O, too blessed! at whose last hour Christ and the Virgin together, with serene countenances, stood watching. Hence he, the conqueror of hell, freed from the bonds of the flesh, removes in placid repose to the everlasting seats, and binds his temples with bright chaplets. Him, therefore, reigning, let us all importunately pray, that he would be present with us, and that he, obtaining pardon for our transgressions, would ASSIGN to us the rewards of peace on high.

"Be praises to thee, be honours to thee, O true God, who reignest and ASSIGNEST golden crowns to thy faithful servants for ever. Amen."—V. 490.

It is painful to remark, that the very same word is employed when the Church of Rome requests Joseph to ASSIGN to the faithful the rewards of peace, and when glory is ascribed to God for ASSIGNING crowns to his faithful servants. These hymns contain expressions which ought to be addressed to the Saviour alone, whose "glory is in the heavens," who is "the hope of us on earth," and "the safeguard of the world." Speaking the truth in love, we confess it would be impiety and sin in us to offer these prayers and praises to the soul of any man, however holy, however blessed, however exalted.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

Nos. IV. & V.

ON THE
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND
ANGELS.

IV. EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
AGAINST IT.

V. EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
AGAINST IT.



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THE present Tracts are the first of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published :—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—
[continued].

WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

Invocation of Saints and Angels.—Evidence of Holy Scripture.

THE Church of Rome, as we have seen in a previous section, teaches her members to pray to the angels of heaven, and the souls of the faithful departed now with God, for their intercessions, and for blessings, and graces, and benefits, which God alone can bestow; and moreover, to plead the merits of the same saints as a ground of their own acceptance with God; and to offer them religious praise and honour. Both in faith and in practice the Church of England holds all this to be wrong, unsound, unjustifiable, and dangerous; and maintains that a Christian, whether engaged in public worship or in private devotions, must, if he would be safe, address his prayers to God alone, and seek blessings in no other way than by directly applying for them to God alone; and in his supplications to the Almighty, plead only the merits, and trust only to the mediation and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one only Mediator, either of redemption or of intercession, between God and man.

Now as persons to whom the supreme Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, has entrusted the oracles of

truth, the written revelation of his will, the first step to be taken by us in the way of determining which of these two contradictory and irreconcilable systems is the true and safe system, and which is unsound and dangerous, will of necessity be to ascertain what conclusions an honest study of that revealed will of God would lead us to form: we must search which is the faith and practice countenanced, recommended, or prescribed in the sacred Book, both in the times of the elder covenant, when "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and also in that "fulness of time" when God spoke to us by his Son.

And here, on this first entrance upon a review of the inspired volume, it will be well for us briefly to recall the principles and tone of mind, the temper and feelings, the frame both of the understanding and the heart, with which we should study the sacred pages, on whatever subject we would try all things, and hold fast what should prove itself most in accordance with the will of God. The two great parts into which the books of Holy Scripture are divided, are sometimes called the Old and New Testaments, sometimes the Old and New Covenants. But whichever view we prefer to take, the practical result will not be in the least affected. Different associations are suggested by these different titles of the inspired volume; yet, under either view, the same honest and good heart, the same patience of investigation, the same upright and unprejudiced judgment, the same exercise of our faculties, and the same enlightened conscience, must be brought to the investigation.

Regarding the book of God as a COVENANT, we must endeavour to ascertain its true intent and meaning on principles the very same with those on which we would interpret a covenant made by ourselves with a person who had joined in it, in full and unsuspecting reliance on our integrity, justice, and honour.

Looking upon the Bible as a WILL OR TESTAMENT, we must bring with us the same principles and feelings

to our inquiry as we should apply if we were called to interpret the last will and testament of our own father, who, with implicit confidence in our uprightness and straightforward dealing, and in our affectionate anxiety to fulfil his intentions, had assigned to us the sacred duty of executor or trustee.

Under the first supposition, our anxiety would be to discover the true intent and meaning of the contracting party; not to seek out plausible excuses for departing from it; not to cull out and exaggerate such expressions as might seem to justify us in adopting the view of the contract most agreeable to our present wishes, and most favourable to our own interests. Our fixed purpose would be, at whatever cost of time, or labour, or self-sacrifice, or personal discomfort, to apply our unbiassed judgment to the interpretation of the deed.

Or, adopting the other analogy, our single desire would be to ascertain the chief and leading objects of our parent's will; what were his intentions generally, what ruling principles seem to have guided him in adopting its provisions; and in all cases of obscurity and doubt, in every thing approaching an appearance of inconsistency in one part with another, we should refer to that great and pervading principle as our test and guide. We should never seek for ambiguous expressions, which might be ingeniously interpreted so as to countenance our departure from the general drift of the will.

Now, only let us act upon these principles in the interpretation of *THAT COVENANT* in which the Almighty has deigned to make Himself one of the contracting parties, and man the other; only let us act on these principles in the interpretation of *THAT TESTAMENT* of which the Saviour of the world is the Testator; and, with God's blessing, we need not fear the result. Any other principle of interpreting the Bible will only confirm the inquirer's prejudices, and involve him more deeply in error.

EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Let us then suppose that a person of a cultivated mind and sound judgment, but hitherto a stranger to revelation, were required to study the Old Testament, with the single view of ascertaining what one object more than any other (subordinate to the great end of preparing the world for the promised Saviour) seemed to be proposed by the Almighty, in imparting to mankind that revelation; could he fix upon any other point with so much reason as he would upon this, —the preservation in the world of a practical belief in the perfect unity of God, and the protection of his worship against the admixture of any other worship whatever; the announcement that the Creator and Governor of the universe is the sole Giver of every temporal and spiritual blessing, the one only Being to whom his rational creatures on earth should pay any religious service whatever, the one only Being to whom mortals must seek, by invocation and prayer, for the supply of all their wants? Through the entire volume the inquirer would find, that the unity of God is announced in every variety of expression; and that the exclusive worship of HIM alone is insisted upon, and guarded and fenced with the utmost jealousy, and in every variety of way, as of the God who heareth prayer, alone to be called upon, alone to be invoked, alone to be adored. So to speak, he would find that recourse was had to every expedient for the express purpose of protecting God's people from embracing in their worship any other being or name whatever. He would find not that supreme adoration was reserved for the Supreme Being, while a sort of secondary honour and inferior invocation was allowed to his own exalted saints and servants: but that the laws of God banished at once and for ever the most distant approximation towards religious honour, the veriest shadow of spiritual invocation to any being except JEHOVAH HIMSELF ALONE.

In process of time the heathen began to deify those mortals who had conferred signal benefits on the human race, or had distinguished themselves in power and skill above their fellow-mortals ; and thus male and female divinities were multiplied on every side. Together with Jupiter, the fabled father of gods and men, who was worshipped under various names in different countries, were associated those "gods many and lords many" which ignorance and superstition, or policy and craft, had invented, and which shared some a greater, some a less portion of popular veneration and religious worship. To the people of God it was again and again most solemnly and awfully denounced, that no such thing should be. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," is a mandate repeated in every variety of language, and under every variety of circumstance. In some passages, indeed, together with the most clear assurances that mortal men need apply to no other dispenser of good, and can want no other, as saviour, advocate, or intercessor, that same truth is announced with such superabundance of repetition, that in the productions of any human writer, the style would be liable to the charge of tautology. In the Bible this repetition serves only to fix on the mind that same principle as an eternal verity never to be questioned, never to be dispensed with, never to be diluted or qualified, never to be invaded by any service, worship, prayer, invocation, or adoration of any other being whatever. Take for example the forty-fifth chapter of *Isaiah* : "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me : I guided thee, though thou hast not known me : that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them : they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation : ye shall not be

ashamed nor confounded world without end. I am the Lord; and there is none else. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain. They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. There is no God beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

But to multiply such passages is needless. Members of the Church of Rome will say, that they acknowledge, as fully as members of our own Church can do, that there is but one supreme God and Lord, to whom alone they intend to offer the worship due to God; and that the appeals which they offer by way of invocation to saints and angels, for their intercession and good offices, do not contravene this principle. But without for a moment questioning their sincerity in making that profession, it may be well here to ask ourselves these few questions:—

First, if it had been intended by the Almighty to forbid any religious application (such as is now professedly the Invocation of Saints and Angels) to any other being than Himself alone, what words could have been employed more stringently prohibitory?

Secondly, had such an address to saints and angels as the Church of Rome now confessedly makes, been contemplated by our heavenly Lawgiver as an exception to the general rule, would not some saving clause, some expressions indicating such an intended exception, have been made in mercy and wisdom? Would not some allusion to it have been discoverable in some page or other of his Divine will?

Thirdly, if such an appeal to the angels of light, or to the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, had been sanctioned under the elder covenant, would not some examples, some few instances, at least some one solitary instance, have been recorded of a faithful servant of God offering such a prayer with the Divine permission?

Lastly, when such strong and repeated declarations and injunctions, interspersed through the entire volume of the Old Testament, show beyond all question the will of God to be, that no other object of religious worship should have any place in the heart or on the tongue of his own true spiritual sons and daughters, is it becoming in a faithful child of our heavenly Father to seek for excuses and palliations, and to invent distinctions between one kind of worship and another? After so many positive warnings against seeking by prayer the aid of any other being whatever, is not a positive command required to justify a mortal man in preferring any prayer to any being, saint, angel, or archangel, save only the one supreme God alone? Instead of any such command, or even permission, appearing, not one single word occurs, from the first syllable in the book of Genesis to the last of the prophet Malachi, which can be forced or strained to countenance the practice of addressing any created being in prayer.

It may, however, be satisfactory to look to such examples in the Old Testament as may seem to have a direct and genuine bearing on the subject. Very many a prayer is recorded of men, to whose sanctity, and integrity, and acceptance with God, the Spirit Himself has set his seal; yet among these prayers there is not found one invocation addressed to saint or angel.

The whole book of Psalms is a manual of devotion, consisting of prayers and praises, composed some by Moses, some by other inspired Israelites of less note, but chiefly by David himself; and what is the force and tendency of their example? Words are spoken in praise of "Moses and Aaron among HIS saints," and of "Samuel among such as called upon HIS name," and mention is made with becoming reverence of the "angels of HIS that do HIM service," but not one word ever falls from the pen of the psalmist addressed by way of invocation to saint or

angel. In the Roman Ritual supplication is made to Abel and Abraham as well as to Michael and all angels. If it is now lawful, if it is now the duty of the worshippers of the true God, to seek his aid through the mediation of those spirits, can we avoid asking why the inspired patriarchs did not appeal to Abel for his mediation? Why did not the inspired David invoke the father of the faithful to intercede for him with God? If the souls of those faithful ones, who in their lifetime appeared to their fellow-mortals to be accepted servants and honoured saints, may be safely addressed in prayer, and be invoked by an act of religious supplication, either to grant us aid, or to intercede with God for aid in our behalf, why did not men, whom God Himself declared to be partakers of his Spirit, offer the same supplication to such departed spirits, as before and after their decease had this testimony from Omniscience itself, that they pleased God? Why is no intimation given in the later books of the Old Testament, that such invocations were addressed to Moses, or Aaron, or Noah, or Abraham?

When wrath was gone out from the presence of the Lord, and the plague was begun among the people, Aaron took a censer in his hand, and stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed. If the soul of Aaron was to be regarded as a spirit influential with God, one whose intercession could avail, one who ought, were it only for his intercession, to be approached in prayer; could a stronger motive be conceived for suggesting that invocation than David must have felt, when the pestilence was destroying its thousands around him, and all his glory, and strength, and his very life, too, were threatened by its resistless ravages? But no; neither Abel, nor Abraham, nor Moses, nor Aaron, must be petitioned to intercede with God, and implore Him to stay his hand. To God, and God alone, for his own mercy's sake, must his afflicted servant turn in supplication.

Among his prayers we find no "Holy Abraham, pray for us!" "Holy Abel, pray for us!" "Holy Aaron, mediate for us, as thou didst for thy brethren of old!" His own Psalm of thanksgiving well describes the object and the nature of his prayer, "When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears."

Abraham, when on earth, prayed God to spare the offending people of Sodom and Gomorrah; but he invoked neither Noah, nor Abel, nor any of the faithful departed, to join their intercessions with his own. Isaac prayed to God for his son Jacob, but he did not ask the mediation of Abraham in his behalf; and when Jacob in his turn supplicated an especial blessing on his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, though with gratitude he called to his mind, and expressed with his tongue the devotedness to the Almighty both of Abraham and of Isaac, yet we never find him appealing to them, or invoking their intercession with the Lord.

When the conscience-struck Israelites felt that they had exposed themselves by sin to the wrath of the Almighty, whose Sovereign power, on the prayer of Samuel, they then witnessed, distrusting the efficacy of their own supplication, and confiding in the intercession of that man of God, they implored Samuel to intercede for them; and Samuel answered their appeal with an assurance, that he would undertake to plead their cause with heaven. "And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not. . . The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake. . . . Moreover, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." The Holy Spirit numbers Samuel among those who "called upon HIS

name:" and when Samuel died, all Israel were gathered together to lament, and to bury him; but when he was once removed from them by death, we read of no petition being offered to him to carry on the same intercessory office in their behalf. As long as he was alive in the flesh, and sojourned on earth with his brethren, they besought him to pray for them, to intercede for blessings with their God and his God (just as among ourselves one Christian asks another to pray for him); but when Samuel's body had been buried in peace, and his soul had returned to God who gave it, the Bible never records any further application to him; we never read of his being "suppliantly invoked," we nowhere find "Holy Samuel, pray for us!"

Again, what announcement could the Almighty Himself make more expressive of his acceptance of the persons of any, than He actually and repeatedly made to Moses with regard to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? How could HE more clearly intimate, that if "the spirits of just men made perfect" could exercise intercessory or mediatorial influence with Him, those three holy patriarchs would possess such power above all others who had ever lived on the earth? "I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.—Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial throughout all generations¹." Did then Moses, in his alarm and dread, when he was afraid to look upon God, call upon those holy and accepted servants to aid him in his perplexity, and intercede for him and his people with the Eternal Being on whose Majesty he dared not to look? Did he teach his

¹ Exod. iii. 6. 15.

people to invoke Abraham, the father of the faithful? That was far from him.

When Moses himself, that saint and servant of the Lord, was called hence, and was buried (though no mortal man was allowed to know the place of his sepulture), did the survivors pray to him for his help and intercession with God? He had wrought before their eyes so many and great miracles as never had before been witnessed on earth; he had in his lifetime been admitted to talk with the Almighty as a man talketh with his friend, and yet the sacred page records no invocation ever breathed to his departed spirit.

We need not multiply instances, and we will here refer only to one more. Hezekiah, who "trusted in the Lord God of Israel²," and clave to the Lord, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments when he and his people were in great peril, addressed his prayer only to God. He offered no invocation to holy David to intercede with the Almighty for his own Jerusalem; he made his supplication directly and exclusively to the Lord God of Israel. And yet the very answer made to that prayer would have seemed to justify Hezekiah in seeking holy David's mediation, if prayer for the intercession of any departed mortal could ever have been sanctioned by heaven. "Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake³." Of what saint in the calendar was such a thing as this ever spoken?

This then is the evidence borne by the books of the Old Testament. No prayer to angel or beatified spirit occurs from its first to its last page. And this is indeed confessed by the chief champions of the Romish Church, though at the same time there is a strong and inconsistent desire to enlist some passages in favour of the invocation of angels, to which

² 2 Kings xix. 15.

³ Kings xx. 5, 6.

we must briefly refer before we bring this subject to a close.

Those writers who openly confess that the Old Testament affords no instance of invocation being offered to the spirits of departed mortals, and are yet desirous of escaping from the force of that evidence as conclusive against the present adoration of saints and angels in the Church of Rome, have recourse to one or the other of two arguments, both equally untenable, to reconcile that fact with their present belief and practice.

One class, with Cardinal Bellarmin at their head, allege this reason, "No one can be invoked who is not admitted to the presence of God in heaven; but before Christ went down to hell and released the spirits from prison, no mortal was admitted into heaven; consequently, before the resurrection of Christ, the spirit of no mortal was invoked." At the close of his preface to the "Church Triumphant," the cardinal says, "The spirits of the patriarchs and prophets, before the coming of Christ, were for this reason not worshipped and invoked as we now worship and invoke the Apostles and Martyrs, because they were yet shut up and detained in prisons below⁴." Again, he says, "Because before the coming of Christ the saints who died did not enter heaven, and saw not God, nor could ordinarily know the prayers of supplicants, therefore it was not customary in the Old Testament to say, 'Holy Abraham, pray for me,' &c., but the men of that time prayed to God only, and alleged the merits of the saints who had already departed, that their own prayers might be aided by them⁵."

We need not here dwell on the inconsistencies and perplexities involved in this assumed theory; far less need we inquire into the state of the souls of the faithful departed before our Lord's advent. With

⁴ Bell. Ingolstadtii, 1601, vol. ii. p. 833.

⁵ P. 900. This last position, "That the men of old, before the time of Christ, pleaded the merits of the Saints," is unfounded.

St. Augustin⁵ and other Christians, we are content to leave that subject where Scripture has left it. But surely before such an assumption can be expected to obtain any acceptance among thinking men, the case of Enoch requires to be well weighed, whose translation from this life to heaven, making, as it has been beautifully expressed, but one step from earth to glory, the Epistle to the Hebrews cites with a most important comment: "Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him⁶:" "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God⁷." Surely, too, the case of Elijah must not be dismissed summarily, of whom the book of truth declares, "that the Lord took him in a whirlwind into heaven;" his ascent being made visible to mortal eyes, as was afterwards the ascension of our blessed Lord Himself. Surely, moreover, before such a theory as Bellarmine's can be received, the language of Holy Scripture must be well examined, which positively declares, that before the resurrection of Christ, at his transfiguration, Moses and Elijah both in glory appeared visibly to his Apostles, and conversed with Him on the holy mount. "And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem⁸."

Whilst we need not dwell longer on this immediate point, two considerations seem to present themselves to our notice altogether decisive as to the evidence borne against the invocation of saints by the writings of the Old Testament. The first is this;—if the spirits of the saints departed were not invoked before the resurrection of Christ, merely because they were not then admitted into heaven, why did not the faithful

⁵ Aug. De Pecc. Orig. c. 23, tom. vii. p. 338.

⁶ Gen. v. 24. ⁷ Heb. xi. 5. ⁸ Luke ix. 30, 31.

and inspired servants of the Lord invoke the angels who were in heaven? The second is this, why did not the inspired Apostles and faithful servants of our Saviour invoke the spirits of those saints after his resurrection, and when the Holy Spirit was present with them to guide them into all truth; that is (according to the theory of Bellarmin, and those who put forth the same view), after those saints had been taken by Christ with Him into his Father's presence? We must not here anticipate our inquiry into the evidence borne by the New Testament against the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome in this point; and we will only add, that whatever be the cause of the absence from the Old Testament of all worship and invocation of Abel and Abraham, whom the Roman Church now invokes, the alleged reason that it was because they were not in heaven till after Christ's resurrection, is utterly contradicted by the conduct of his Apostles and disciples, recorded in the New Testament, for more than half a century after his return to his glory in heaven. This is, however, the proper place for entertaining the first of the two considerations suggested above,—why did not the holy men of old under the elder covenant invoke the angels, as the Roman Church now does?

The inspired writers of the Old Testament, and those to whom through their mouth and pen the Divine word was addressed, were as fully as ourselves acquainted with the existence of the angelic beings. They were aware of the station held by those angels in the court of heaven, of their power as God's ambassadors and agents for good. Either their own eyes had seen the operations of the Almighty by the hands of those celestial messengers, or their ears had heard their fathers tell what HE had done by their instrumentality in times of old. Why, then, did not the chosen people offer to the angels the same worship and invocation which the Church of Rome now addresses to them? In the condition of the holy

angels, no one ever suggests that any change affecting the argument has taken place since the time when man was created. And as the angels in heaven were in themselves the same, equally in the presence of God, and equally able to succour men through that long space of four thousand years which intervened between Adam's creation and the birth of HIM who was Son of Adam and Son of God, so was man in the same dependent state, needing the guidance and protection of a power above his own. Nay, surely, whatever difference affecting the argument has arisen in the state of man, it must all add weight to the reason against the invocation of angels by Christians. God's people of old had no clear knowledge, as we have, of one great Mediator who is ever making intercession for us; and yet they never sought the mediation, and intercession, and good offices of those superhuman beings, of whose existence, and power, and employment in works of blessing to man, they had, however, no doubt. This is a point of much importance, and it will be well to refer to a few passages in support of it.

When David, who had himself⁹ visible demonstration of the existence and ministration of the angels, called upon them to unite with his own soul, and with the whole creation throughout the world, in praising their merciful, glorious, and omnipotent Creator, he thus conveys to us his own exalted ideas of their nature, their excellence, and their ministration: "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye angels of his, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts; ye servants of his, that do his pleasure¹." David knew, moreover, that one of the offices, in the execution of which the angels do God's pleasure, consists in their succouring and defending us on earth. In a psalm, prophetic of

⁹ 1 Chron. xxi. 16.

¹ Psalm ciii. 19—21.

the Redeemer, the Psalmist says, "There shall no harm happen unto thee, nor shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone²." And again, with exquisitely beautiful imagery, he represents those same blessed servants as a host of God's spiritual soldiers, keeping watch and ward over the poorest of the children of men who would take refuge in his mercy. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them³." And yet David, the prophet of the Lord, never addresses to these beings, high, and glorious, and powerful as he acknowledges them to be, one single invocation; he neither asks them to assist him, nor to pray for him, nor to pray with him in his behalf.

Isaiah was admitted by the Holy Spirit to witness in the fulness of its glory the court and the throne of heaven; and he heard the voices of the seraphim proclaiming their Maker's praise; he experienced also personally the effect of their ministration, when one of them said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged⁴." Still, though the prophet must have regarded this angel as his benefactor under God, yet neither to this seraph, nor to any of the host of heaven, does he offer one prayer for their good offices, not even by their intercession. He ever ascribes all to God alone, and never joins any other name with HIS, either in supplication or in praise.

Daniel's case, too, bears immediately on the point before us. He acknowledges, not only that the Lord's omnipotent hand had rescued him from the jaws of the lions, but that the deliverance was brought about by the ministration of an angel: "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths,

² Psalm xci. 10—12.³ Psalm xxxiv. 7.⁴ Isaiah vi. 7.

that they have not hurt me¹." Yet, throughout Daniel's prayers, we can find no allusion to any even of the highest angels. He had seen Gabriel before his prayer, he had heard the voice and felt the hand of that heavenly messenger who was commissioned to reveal to him what was to come; and immediately after the offering of his prayers, the same Gabriel announces himself as one come forth to give the prophet skill and understanding. And yet, neither to Gabriel nor to any other of the angels of God, does one word of invocation fall from the lips of Daniel. In the supplications of that holy, intrepid, and blessed servant and child of God, it is in vain to search for any thing approaching in speech to the invocation, "Holy Gabriel, pray for us!"

The other strange reason assigned for the people of God not having "suppliantly invoked" saints and angels in times of the Old Testament, to which we before adverted, is this,—in those times prayer was not offered to God through a mediator at all; and as the one Mediator was not then revealed in his person and his offices, the subsidiary intercessors, to whom the Church of Rome now prays, could not act, and therefore could not be invoked by man. The answer to this suggestion is at once conclusive; that Mediator has been revealed in his person and in his offices, and has been expressly declared to be "THE ONE Mediator between God and man;" we therefore seek God's covenanted mercies through Him. Those subsidiary intercessors, as they are called, have never been revealed, and therefore we do not seek their aid. To assure us that our heavenly Father willed us to approach Him by secondary and subsidiary mediators and intercessors, a revelation would have been required as clear and unquestionable as that which He has vouchsafed to us of the mediation of his blessed Son. Had

¹ Dan. vi. 22.

the will of God been that we should seek his mercy through the intercessions of saints, and martyrs, and angels, to be secured by our own prayers to them, is it conceivable that HE would not have given us some intimation of his will in this respect? If believers in the Gospel were expected to look to unnumbered mediators of intercession in heaven as well as the one Mediator of redemption (a distinction of which we find no trace in Holy Scripture), would not the Gospel itself have announced it? Could such declarations as these from the oracles of Divine Truth have been put on record without any qualifying or limiting expressions? "He is able also to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—"There is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." But this involves the question which must next be discussed, what is the evidence of the New Testament on this point? All we would anticipate here is, that if the irresistible argument from the Old Testament is met on the ground that no mediator at all was then revealed, we must require a distinct revelation of the existence and offices of other mediators and intercessors who are to be suppliantly invoked by us, before we can be justified in applying to them for their intervention with God in our behalf. The question, therefore, now is; though no prayer to angel or beatified spirit occurs in the Old Testament from its first to its last page, nor any intimation of the office of such mediators, much less of our duty to invoke them, yet are such mediators revealed in the pages of the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

It may however be wise first to advert, though briefly⁶, to those passages in the Old Testament to which some

⁶ The reader will find this subject examined more fully in "Primitive Christian Worship," p. 38.

Roman Catholics appeal as countenancing religious adoration to angels. The two principal instances relied on are, first, Abraham bowing down before his heavenly visitants; and secondly, the words of Jacob when he gave his benediction to his grandsons.

With regard to the first case, even did the words imply religious adoration, it could not justify our paying religious adoration to angels; because whatever it was, agreeably to the interpretation of the best commentators both ancient and modern, the person whom Abraham then addressed was no created being, neither angel nor seraph, but the Word, the eternal Son of God, the Angel of the Covenant, Himself God⁷. But the fact is, that no argument can be drawn from this passage; for the word which the authorized Roman version translates “adoravit,” and the Douay Bible renders “adored,” is the same, letter for letter, with the word employed to signify Jacob’s bowing down to his brother Esau; and which means, as the English Bible has it, “bowed down toward the ground⁸.”

In the other passage the very words of Jacob prove that when he expressed his desire that the angel, “which had redeemed him from all evil, would bless the lads,” that Being was no other than the same Angel of the Covenant, God revealing Himself to mortal eyes. And this, too, is the interpretation put upon the passage by the early fathers. Among others, Eusebius and Athanasius declare the person spoken of by Jacob to be God the Son. “And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who fed me all my life long unto this day, the ANGEL which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.”—“And the angel of God spake . . . I

⁷ Among others, see Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryph.* c. 56. See also for the next instance, Athanasius, Paris, 1698, vol. i. p. 561; Euseb. *Demonst. Evan.* v. 10.

⁸ Gen. xviii. 2; xxxiii. 1—3.

am the God of Beth-el, where thou vowedst a vow unto me⁹."

We must now examine the evidence borne by the books of the New Testament on our present subject.

⁹ Gen. xlviii. 15, 16; xxxi. 11. 13.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. V.

ON THE
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND
ANGELS.
EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
AGAINST IT.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

Invocation of Saints and Angels.—Evidence of the New Testament against it.

THOUGH the testimony borne by the Old Testament against the invocation of saints and angels is, as we have seen, strong and irresistible, yet it has been said that we are living under another dispensation; that to us as Christians, neither the precepts nor the examples of the patriarchal and Mosaic times are applicable; and that consequently the injunctions from heaven, given of old to preserve the chosen people from pagan idolatry, do not prohibit us, under the Gospel, from seeking the aid of those departed saints who are now reigning with Christ. But surely to those whose heart's desire is to fulfil the will of God in all things, those commands and examples are still most strictly applicable, as conveying a knowledge of the will of our heavenly Father, that his sons and daughters on earth should associate no name, however exalted, with his own holy name, in prayer and spiritual invocation. To those who can be content to depart from that will, whenever they can devise plausible arguments and refined distinctions to countenance such departure, we are not here addressing ourselves.

Before, then, it can be safely concluded that Chris-

tians have a liberty, denied to believers under the former dispensations, of addressing prayers to saints and angels for their aid and intercession, surely an authoritative declaration to that effect from the divine Lord of all our dispensations must be produced, clear and unequivocal. But from the very first to the very last word of the New Testament, we find the doctrines, the precepts, and the examples, the pervading and reigning spirit of the entire volume, combining with voices loud and clear, to impress upon us this principle of devotion,—‘Pray to God Almighty only, and pray only in the name and for the sake of his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, our only Mediator in heaven: offer no prayer, no supplication, no entreaty, to any other being in the unseen world, neither saint nor angel, though it be only to ask for their intercession with the Great God.’ This, however, involves the whole question, and must be fairly and thoroughly sifted.

Let us then review the entire volume with close and minute scrutiny, and ask ourselves, Is there a single passage which directly sanctions any religious invocation to any being except God alone? And then let us resolve this point: In a matter of so vital importance, of so immense interest, and of so sacred a character as the worship of the Supreme Being, who declares Himself to be a jealous God, ought we to suffer any refinements of casuistry to entice us from the clear light of revelation? If it were God’s good pleasure to make exceptions to his rule—a rule so repeatedly and so imperatively enacted and enforced—surely our knowledge of his gracious dealings with mankind, would have taught us to look for an announcement of the exception by an inspired tongue or pen, in terms equally forcible and explicit. Instead of this, we find no single act, no single word, nothing which even by implication can be forced to sanction any prayer or religious invocation, of whatever kind, to any being, save to Himself alone; the God who

heareth prayer, and who has revealed to us his only Son, as the one Mediator between God and man.

In this inquiry we must first look to the language and conduct of our blessed Lord Himself, whose prayers to his Father are upon record for our instruction and comfort, and whose precepts and example form the best rule of a Christian's life. So far from repealing the ancient law, he repeats in his own person its solemn announcement, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord¹;" and commands us with authority, "When thou prayest, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly²." Undoubtedly our Lord is here cautioning his followers against engaging in religious acts for the purposes of the hypocrite; but neither here nor elsewhere is there any allusion in a single word of his to prayer from a mortal on this earth to an angel or saint in heaven. And yet occasions were multiplied, on which some reference to the invocation of angels, and their intercession, would have been natural, and apparently called for, had his will been that his disciples should unite such an invocation with their prayers to his Father, and such an intercession, as auxiliary to his own.

Again and again He places beyond all doubt the reality of the existence of angels, and of their good offices in behalf of mankind; but it is as they are God's servants, and act at God's bidding, not in answer to any supplication of ours. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus has been appealed to for opposite testimony³; but the parable is not in point; and were it in point, it might be fairly and strongly urged against our invoking the spirit of any departed mortal, even the Father of the faithful himself. What are the circumstances of the parable⁴? A lost soul, in the regions of torment, prays to Abraham in the regions of the blessed, and the spirit of the deceased

¹ Mark xii. 29.

² Bellarmin, vol. ii. p. 895.

³ Matt. vi. 6.

⁴ Luke xvi. 19.

and blessed Patriarch professes to have no power to grant the request of the deceased and condemned spirit. The practice, indeed, of our Roman Catholic brethren would have been exemplified here, had our Lord represented the rich man's five brethren still on earth as pious men, supplicating Abraham in heaven to pray for themselves, or for the mitigation of their lost brother's punishment and his woes. But then the case would have afforded Christians little encouragement to follow such an example, when they found Abraham declaring himself unable to aid them in attaining the object of their prayer, or in any way to assist them. Without one single exception, we find our Saviour's example, precepts, and doctrines⁵, to be decidedly against the practice of invoking saint or angel; while not one solitary act or word of his can be cited to countenance or palliate it.

It follows next that we inquire into the writings of Christ's Apostles and immediate followers, to whom He graciously promised that the Holy Spirit should guide them into all truth. In the Acts of the Apostles various instances of prayer attract our notice, but not one ejaculation is found there to any other being save God alone. Neither angel nor saint is invoked. The Apostles prayed for guidance in the government of Christ's infant Church, but it was thus: "Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men⁶:" they prayed for their own acceptance with God, but it was "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit⁷." They prayed for each other, as in behalf of St. Peter in prison; but we are expressly told, that the prayer which was made without ceasing by the Church for him was addressed to God⁸.

To deliver St. Peter from his chains an angel was sent on an especial mission from heaven; but though St. Peter saw him, and heard his voice, and followed him, and knew of a surety that the Lord had employed

⁵ See especially St. John xiv. 14; xv. 16; xvi. 23, 24.

⁶ Acts i. 24.

⁷ Ibid. vii. 59.

⁸ Ibid. xii. 5.

the ministration of an angel to liberate him from his bonds, yet we do not hear of Peter afterwards praying to angels to secure their good offices and their intercession with God: nor has he once intimated to others that such applications would avail, or were allowable. He exhorts his fellow-Christians to pray, "Watch unto prayer;" but it is because "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers". He himself prays for them, but it is that the God of all grace might make them perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them. He suggests no invocation of saint or angel to intercede with God for them. He bids them cast all their care upon God, in the assurance that God himself careth for them.

St. Paul also experienced in his own person the comfort of an angel's ministration, bidding him cast off all fear when in the extreme of imminent peril¹⁰: but with him God, and God alone, is the object of prayer throughout; by him no saint or angel is alluded to as one whose intercession might be sought by himself or by us. He speaks in glowing language of patriarchs, prophets, and angels; but unto none of these would he turn in prayer. "Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God". And can any one receive, in the plain meaning of his words, the solemn caution which he gives to the Colossians on the subject of worship, and think that St. Paul could have uttered these words without any exception or qualifying expression, if he had worshipped angels himself by invocation, merely asking them for their prayers, or had meant us to do so? "Let no one beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, not holding the head"; which "Head" he had before declared to be the Son of God, in whom we have redemption through his blood, "even the forgiveness of our sins."

⁹ 1 Pet. iv. 7; iii. 12.

¹ Phil. iv. 6.

¹⁰ Acts xxvii. 23.

² Col. ii. 18.

It has been said that St. Paul does not here prohibit all worship of angels, but only such worship as would cause those who offered it to desert the worship of God:—but had that been his meaning, would not the Apostle have told us so?

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the inspired penman brings before our minds with most fervent uplifting eloquence, together with Abel, and Abraham, and David, that goodly fellowship of the prophets, that holy army of martyrs whose names were written in the book of life: he speaks as though he were an eye-witness of what he describes, of the general assembly of the Church of the first-born³. Had the thought of seeking by invocation the support or intercession of saint or angel been familiar to him,—had the thought ever been entertained favourably in his mind, could he have allowed such an occasion to pass by without even alluding to any benefit that might result from our invoking such friends of God? But so far is he from any such allusion, that the utmost he says at the close of his eulogy is this: “These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect⁴.”

The beloved Apostle, who could look forward in full assurance of faith to the day of Christ's second coming, and who knew that “when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,” has left us this record of his sentiments concerning prayer: “This is the confidence that we have in HIM, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us⁵.” St. John alludes to no intercessor, to no advocate, save only “that advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is also the propitiation for our sins⁶.” St. John never suggests to us the advocacy or intercession of saint or angel; with him God in Christ is all in all.

The case of St. James, equally to the point, and strongly illustrative of the truth, is the last to which

³ Col. i. 12. ⁴ Heb. xi. 39, 40. ⁵ 1 John v. 14. ⁶ 1 John ii. 1, 2.

we will now refer. He is anxious to impress on his fellow-Christians the efficacy of our intercessions. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much⁷." He instances its power with God in the case of Elijah, a man so holy that the Almighty suffered him not to pass through the regions of death and the grave, but translated him at once from this life to glory. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." And yet St. James is very far from suggesting the efficacy or lawfulness of any invocation to the hallowed spirit of this man, whose prayer had been permitted to influence the elements and natural powers of the sky and the earth. He exhorts all men to pray, but it must be to God alone, and directly to God, without applying for the intervention of any mediators or intercessors from among angels or men: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering⁸." Like the writer to the Hebrews, he would have us come ourselves "boldly" and directly "to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Surely these Apostles, chosen heralds for conveying the truths of salvation throughout the world, knew well how the Almighty could best be approached by his children on earth; and had the invocation of saint or angel found a place in their creed, they would not have kept back so important an article of faith and practice from us.

Before leaving this part of our inquiry, it is necessary to weigh the import of two passages in the New Testament, often quoted on our present subject, one in

⁷ James v. 16.

⁸ James i. 5, 6.

the Acts of the Apostles, the other in the Apocalypse.

The holy Apostles, Barnabas and Paul, by a striking miracle had excited feelings of religious reverence and devotion among the people of Lystra, who prepared to offer sacrifice to them as two of their fabled deities⁹. The indignant zeal with which these two ministers of the word rushed forward to prevent such an act of impiety, however admirable and affecting, does not constitute the chief reason for which reference is here made to this incident. They were, undoubtedly, still clothed with mortal flesh, and the weakness of human nature; and the priest and the people were ready to offer to them the wonted victims, the abomination of the heathen. Equally clear is the wide difference, in many particulars, between such an act and the act of a Christian praying to their spirits after their departure hence, and supplicating them to intercede with the true God in their behalf; and on this difference Roman Catholic writers have held the inapplicability of this incident to the present question. But, surely, if any such prayer to departed saints, as the Roman Church now offers, had been familiar to the minds of those Apostles, instead of repelling the religious address of the inhabitants of Lystra at once and for ever, they would have altered the tone of their remonstrance; and not have suppressed the truth, when so good an opportunity offered itself for imparting it. And, supposing it was part of their commission to announce and explain the invocation of saints at all, as a doctrine of the Gospel, on what occasion could an announcement of what would be a just and authorized and beneficial invocation of angels and saints departed, have been more appropriate in the Apostles than when they were denouncing the unjustifiable offering of sacrifices to themselves when living?

But whether the more appropriate place for such an announcement were at Lystra, at Corinth, at Athens,

⁹ Acts xiv. 11.

or at Rome, it matters not; nor whether the doctrine would have been more advantageously communicated by their oral teaching, or in their epistles. If the Apostles by their example, or instruction, had sanctioned the invocation of saints and angels, it would have inevitably appeared in some page or other of the New Testament, in the course of the fifty years and more, between the resurrection of Christ and the date of the last Canonical Scripture. Instead of this, the whole tenour of the Holy Volume is in perfect accordance with the spirit of the apostolical remonstrance at Lystra, to the fullest and utmost extent of its meaning, "We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities to serve the living God."

On the weight and cogency of the other instance, also, it well becomes every Christian to ponder carefully and honestly. St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, when admitted to view with his own eyes, and to hear with his mortal ears the things of heaven, rapt in amazement and awe, fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed him these things ¹. If the adoration were ever justifiable, surely it was then; and what a testimony to the end of the world would have been put upon record, had the adoration of an angel by the blessed John at such a moment, when he had the mysteries and the glories of heaven before him, been received and sanctioned! But what is the fact? "Then said he, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book: worship God." It is difficult to understand, it is impossible to admit, the refinement by which the conclusiveness of this direct refusal of all religious adoration and worship is attempted to be set aside. Uttered without any qualification, at such a time, by such a being, to such a man, these words are conclusive beyond gainsaying to those who resolve to follow

¹ Rev. xxii. 8.

Scripture, and not to bend Scripture to their own theories. The interpretations put upon this passage, and the inference drawn from them by a series of our most trustworthy guides, with St. Athanasius at their head, present to our minds so entirely the plain, straightforward, honest, and common-sense view of the case, that all the subtilty of casuists, and all the ingenuity of modern refinements, will never be able to establish any other in its stead. "The angel (for such are the words of that ancient defender of the true faith) in the Apocalypse forbids John, when desiring to worship him, saying, 'See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book: worship God.' Therefore to be the object of worship belongs to God only; and this even the angels know: they, though they surpass others in glory, yet are all creatures, and are not among objects of worship, but among those who worship the sovereign Lord¹."

To say, as some have said, that St. John was too fully illuminated by the Holy Spirit to do what was in itself wrong, especially a second time, is as untenable as it would be to maintain that St. Peter, whom the Saviour had pronounced blessed, could not, especially thrice, have done wrong when he denied our Lord. St. John did wrong by worshipping the angel, or the angel would not have chided and warned him. And to say that the angel here forbade John personally to worship him, because John was himself a fellow-servant and one of the prophets, and thus that the prohibition only tended to exalt the prophetic character, and not to condemn in others, not prophets, the worship of angels, is proved by the angel's own words to be a groundless assumption, who reckons himself a fellow-servant not with prophets only and St. John, but with all those also who keep the words

¹ A'hanasius, Orat. 2 Cont. Ar. vol. i. p. 491.

of the book of God; thus equally forbidding every faithful Christian to worship his fellow-servants, the angels. These are not far from the last words in the volume of inspired truth, and together with those last words themselves, they seem to us, as with "the voice of a great multitude, and of many waters, and of mighty thunderings," from the very throne itself of the Most High to proclaim to every inhabiter of the earth, 'Fall down before no created being in religious worship of any kind; invoke, call upon, pray to no created being, whether saint or angel: worship and adore God only: pray only to God. Trust to his mercy; seek no other mediator or intercessor in the unseen world, save only his own blessed Son.' "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Thus the New Testament, the Gospel covenant, that gracious dispensation under which we live, so far from relaxing the strictness of the law of the Old Testament, in respect to the subject before us, so far from countenancing any departure from the obligation of that code which limits prayers and all religious worship to God only, so far from suggesting the distinction of worship invented comparatively of late years into three kinds, one for God, another for the Virgin, a third for saints and angels; so far from sanctioning, even by a shadow, invocation to sainted men and to angels as intercessors for us with the eternal Giver of all good—so far from this, the Gospel renews and repeats the commands given of old, and declares also, that our invocation, in order to be Christian, must be addressed to God alone; and

that there is one, and only one, Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who is at the right hand of his Father, a merciful High Priest, sympathizing with us in our infirmities, ever making intercession for us, and able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God through Him.

THE END.

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WHAT IS ROMANISM?

Nos. VI. & VII.

ON THE
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND
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VI. EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AGAINST IT.

VII. EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AGAINST IT.—*Continued.*



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- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—
[continued].

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

Invocation of Saints and Angels.—Evidence of the Primitive Church against it.

ON the subject of the worship in the Church of Rome of saints and angels, we are induced to examine into the evidence of Christian antiquity, not by any mis-giving lest the testimony of the Holy Scriptures might appear defective or doubtful; far less by the unworthy notion that God's word needs the support of the suffrages of man. On the contrary, the voice of God in his revealed word is clear, certain, and indisputable, commanding the invocation of Himself alone in acts of religious worship, and condemning any such departure from that singleness of adoration, as now distinguishes the Church of Rome, in her worship of saints and angels, from our own communion. It is a fixed principle in our creed, that whenever God's word is clear and certain, human evidence cannot be weighed against it in "the balance of the sanctuary." When the Lord hath spoken, well does it become the whole earth to be silent before Him. But when Scripture is silent, or where its meaning is doubtful, the testimony of the early Church offers itself to us as a guide to be followed with watchful care and due reverence.

Now for the present let it be supposed, that instead of the oracles of God having spoken, as we know

them to have spoken, with a voice clear, strong, and uniform, against the invocation of saints and angels, their voice had been doubtful; suppose in this case the question had been left open in Scripture, and we were therefore the more anxious to ascertain the faith and practice of the primitive Church, then what evidence should we be able to draw from the remains of the earliest ages? What testimony do the writers who followed next, after the canon of Scripture was closed, bear upon this point? To what conclusion would a full and candid inquiry into the real spirit of those authors lead us in answer to this question—Whether we of the Church of England, by scrupulously abstaining from offering, in thought or word, any prayer, or supplication, entreaty, request, or invocation whatever, to any spiritual being except God, are treading in the steps of the first Christians, adhering to the very pattern they set, or not? and whether members of the Church of Rome, by addressing angels or saints in any form of invocation, seeking aid from them by their intercession or otherwise, have or have not swerved decidedly and far from those same footsteps and departed widely from that pattern?

An examination, then, of the passages collected by the most celebrated Roman Catholic writers, and a searching scrutiny into the undisputed original works of primitive writers of the Greek and Latin Churches, seem to force upon us two conclusions:—

First, negatively, that the Christian writers through the first three centuries and more, never refer to the invocation of saints and angels as a practice with which they were familiar, or which they had adopted for themselves; that they have not recorded or alluded to any forms of invocation of that kind, as used by themselves or by the Church in their days; and that no services of the earliest times contain hymns, litanies, or collects to angels, or to the spirits of the faithful departed.

In the second place, positively, that the principles which these early Christians habitually maintain, are irreconcilable with such a practice. In tracing (as the original documents supply us with suggestions) the worship of saints and angels, we proceed one step after another, from the earliest practice of the Church—the practice of addressing prayers to Almighty God alone, for the sake and through the merits of his blessed Son, the only Mediator between God and man—to the lamentable innovation, both of praying to God through the mediation of departed mortals, and of invoking those mortals themselves, as the actual dispensers of the blessings sought. It is indeed painfully interesting to trace the several steps, one after another, beginning with the sound doctrine maintained by various early writers, that the souls of the saints are not yet reigning with Christ in heaven, and ending with the anathema of the Council of Trent against all who maintained that doctrine; beginning with prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God alone, and ending with daily prayers both to saints and angels; one deviation from the strict line of religious duty, and the pure singleness of Christian worship successively gliding into another, till at length, with a few notable exceptions, the whole of Christendom was seen to acquiesce in public and private devotions, which in earlier and better times, had they been proposed, the whole of Christendom would at once with unanimity have rejected.

The places and occasions most favourable for witnessing and estimating the gradual innovations in the worship of the early times of Christianity, are the tombs of the martyrs, and the churches where their remains were deposited; at the periods of the annual celebration of their martyrdom, or, in some instances of what was called, their translation, that is, the removal of their mortal remains from their former resting-place to a new spot, generally dedicated to their memory. On these occasions an almost incredible enthusiasm

reigned; sometimes, as St. Chrysostom¹ tells us, the ardour of the worshippers being little removed from madness. But even at times of less excitement, by contemplating the acts and sufferings of a beloved and admired martyr, immediately after his death, recalling his looks, and words, and steadfastness; and exhorting each other to picture to themselves his holy countenance then fixed on them, his tongue addressing them, his sufferings still fresh before them, encouraging all to follow his example, they were led to consider him as actually himself one of the faithful assembled round his tomb. Hence they cherished first the hope, then the belief, that he was praying with them, as well as for them; that he heard their eulogy on his Christian excellence; and took pleasure in the honours paid to his memory: hence they inferred, together with his good-will towards them, his ability also, as though he were still on earth, to promote their welfare: hence they proceeded by a fatal step, first to implore him to procure them bodily relief from their present sufferings; next they invoked him to plead their cause with God, and to intercede for the supply of their spiritual wants, and the ultimate salvation of their souls; and lastly, they prayed to him directly as himself the dispenser of temporal and spiritual blessings.

The following then is the order in which the innovations in Christian worship seem to have taken place, being chiefly introduced at the annual celebration of martyrdoms.

1st. In the first ages confession, and prayer, and praise were offered to the Supreme Being alone, and for the sake of his Son our only Saviour and Advocate; when mention was made of saints or martyrs, it was to thank God for the graces bestowed on his faithful ones when on earth, and to pray to God for grace to follow their good examples, and attain through Christ to the same end and crown of a

¹ St. Chrys. Paris, 1718, vol. vii. p. 330.

Christian's earthly struggles. This sort of worship was usually accompanied by a homily, setting forth the Christian excellence of the saint, and encouraging the survivors so to follow him as he followed Christ.

2nd. The second stage appears to have been a prayer to Almighty God, that He would suffer the supplications and intercessions of angels and saints, (their embassies, as they were called) to prevail with Him and bring down a blessing on their fellow petitioners on earth; the idea having spread among enthusiastic worshippers, that the spirits of the saints were suffered to be present at their tombs, and to join with the faithful in their addresses to the throne of grace.

3rd. The third grade appears to have owed its origin to the practice of orators dwelling continually on the excellencies and glories of the saints—in the panegyrics delivered over their remains—representing their constancy and Christian virtues as super-human and divine, and as having conferred lasting benefits on the Church. By these benefits at first were meant the comfort and encouragement of their good example, and the honour flowing to the religion of the cross from the testimony they had borne to its truth even unto death; but in process of time, the habit grew of attaching a sort of mysterious efficacy to their merits; hence sprang this third gradation in religious worship, prayers to the Almighty, that “He would hear his suppliants, and grant their requests for the sake of his martyred servant, and by the efficacy of that martyr’s merit.”

4th. Hitherto, unauthorized and objectionable as are the two last forms of prayer, still the petitions in each case were directed to God alone. The next step swerved lamentably from that principle of worship, and the petitioners were led to address their requests to angels and sainted men in heaven, at first, however, confining their petitions to the asking for their prayers and intercessions with Almighty God.

5th. The last stage in this progressive degeneracy of Christian worship was to petition the saints and angels directly and immediately themselves, at first for the temporal, and afterwards for the spiritual benefits which the petitioners desired to obtain from heaven. For it is not less evident than curious, that the worshippers seem for some time to have petitioned the saints for temporal and bodily benefits, before they proceeded to ask for spiritual blessings at their hands, or through their intercessions².

Of these several gradations and stages, we find traces in the records of Christian antiquity less and less faint, as superstitions and the corruptions of apostolic doctrine spread wider, and leavened more of Christian worship: Of all of them we have lamentable instances in the ritual of the Romish Church. But, as we now proceed to show, it was not so from the beginning. In the earliest ages we find only the first of these forms of worship exemplified, and it is the only form retained in our English ritual, of which the prayer for Christ's Church militant here on earth furnishes a beautiful specimen: "We bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom: Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen."

Before we refer in detail to some of the invaluable remains of Christian antiquity, in proof of our views, three observations may be premised.

1st. We do so, not for the purpose of attesting the exact accuracy of the above representation as to the various stages of the worship of saints and angels in the order of time (the soundness of our argument not depending upon that accuracy), but to be enabled to answer satisfactorily this question, Whether the invocation of saints and angels prevailed from the

² See Basil. Orat. in Mamanta Martyrem.

first in the Christian Church, or whether it was an innovation introduced after pagan superstition, in the worship of its many inferior divinities, had begun to mingle its poisonous corruptions with the pure worship of Almighty God?

2nd. The field of Christian antiquity is too wide to be even cursorily examined here, and we must refer the reader who desires to verify any of our statements, or scrutinize fully and minutely any of our arguments on points of much research, to the work lately taken upon the Catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to which reference has been already made, entitled, "Primitive Christian Worship." But a brief outline of the evidence, and specimens of the conclusive testimonies of primitive writers at different periods cannot be otherwise than satisfactory to those who desire to make themselves generally acquainted with the nature of the argument.

3rd. We conceive that few persons will be disposed to doubt, that if the primitive believers were taught by the Apostles to address the saints in heaven and the holy angels with adoration and prayers, the earliest Christian records must have contained clear and indisputable references to the fact, and that undesigned allusions to the custom would inevitably have presented themselves to our notice here and there. Not that we could expect to meet with full statements of the doctrine or practice of the primitive Church in this particular, far less such elaborate apologies for the practice as abound in later times. But what is more satisfactory in proof of the general prevalence of any custom, expressions would incidentally occur implying habitual familiarity with such worship. For example, in the remains of Christian antiquity, from the very earliest of all, such expressions are constantly meeting us (even when the writer is engaged on some other and different topic), as imply the doctrines of the ever blessed Trinity, the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the influences of the Holy Spirit; habitual prayer and

praise offered to the Saviour, as very and eternal God; the observance of the holy sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, with other tenets and practices of the Apostolic Church. It is impossible to study the remains of Christian antiquity without being assured beyond the reach of doubt, that such doctrines and practices prevailed in the universal Church from the days of the Apostles. Can the invocation of saints and angels and the blessed Virgin be made an exception to this rule? And can it stand this test? Had it prevailed, is it not beyond gainsaying that we must have found traces of it in the earliest works of primitive antiquity, especially in the forms of prayer and exhortations to prayer with which those works abound? Can such traces be found?

CENTURY I. THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

The books called the works of the Apostolic Fathers are full, and copious, and explicit, and cogent on the nature and duty of prayer and supplications, as well for public as for private blessings, and of intercession by one Christian for another, and for the whole race of mankind, no less than of petitions for mercy on himself; and yet, though openings of every kind offered themselves for a natural introduction of the subject, there is in no one single instance any reference or allusion to the invocation of saints or angels as a practice either approved or even known in those times. With the different opinions as to the exact time when these writings first appeared, and with the genuineness of all or any of them, though interesting questions in themselves, we have nothing to do in this argument. They were certainly all in existence before the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, and their testimony is not affected by the exactness of the date assigned to them. Not only, however, is the absence of all allusion to prayers offered to saints and angels decisive of the question, in point of negative evidence, but various passages occur³ which

³ The references are made to the edition published at Antwerp, 1598.

supply positive testimony on the subject. The nature of the present work does not admit of many quotations, or long discussions, and throughout this reference to the testimony of ancient writers we will endeavour to be as brief as may be consistent with the desire of enabling the reader to form a fair estimate of the evidence.

1. THE EPISTLE OF ST. BARNABAS gives directions on the subject of prayer, but it is prayer to God only. He speaks of angels, but not as beings who were to be invoked by us. The saints of whom he speaks are not souls in heaven to be petitioned by us on earth, but Christians on earth whom a true Christian is bound to search out, and comfort, and assist on their way to heaven.

“There are two ways of doctrine and authority, one of light, the other of darkness. Over the one are appointed angels of God, conductors of the light; over the other, angels of Satan. . . . Thou shalt love Him that made thee; thou shalt glorify Him that saved thee from death. . . . Thou shalt love as the apple of thine eye one who speaketh to thee the word of the Lord. Call to remembrance the day of judgment night and day. Every day thou shalt search out the persons of the saints. . . . proceeding to exhortation, and anxiously caring to save a soul by the word. . . . Thou shalt not come with a bad conscience to thy prayer. The Lord of glory and all grace be with your spirit. Amen.”

2. THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS⁴.—“Let us then remove from us double-heartedness, and faint-heartedness, and never at all doubt of supplicating any thing from God, or say within ourselves, How can I who have been guilty of so many sins against Him ask of the Lord and receive? But with thine whole heart turn to the Lord, and ask of Him without doubting; and thou shalt know his great mercy, that He will

⁴ The passage, of which we can here give but a brief extract, will be found in *Primitive Worship*, p. 77, and is full of sound, and pious, and comfortable sentiments.

not forsake thee, but will fulfil the desire of thy soul," &c.

Speaking of the angels, the writer says, "These are all to be revered for their dignity. By these, as it were by a wall, the Lord is girded round. But the gate is the Son of God, who is the only way to God: for no one shall enter into God except by his Son."

3. CLEMENT, BISHOP OF ROME, has left us an epistle, which no one can read without agreeing with Jerome, that it is "very admirable." Clement speaks of angels, and of the holy men of old who pleased God, and were blessed, and were taken to their reward. He urges to prayer—he specifies the objects and the subjects of our prayer—he speaks of the saints, and of our remembering them with compassion for our own good—(just as St. John says, Let him who loveth God love his brother also; and as St. Paul speaks of our ministering to the necessities of the saints)—he invites us to contemplate with reverence Abraham and the other faithful ones, but it is only to imitate their good examples—he bids us think of St. Paul and St. Peter, but it is to listen to their godly admonitions. Throughout there is not the most distant allusion to the saints and angels, as persons to whom supplication should be addressed. "Let us venerate the Lord Jesus, whose blood was given for us." . . . "Let us approach HIM (God) in holiness of soul, lifting up holy and undefiled hands towards Him . . . loving our merciful and tender Father, who hath made us a portion of his elect⁵."

Of any other being to whom the invocations of the faithful should be offered, except God alone, and of any other advocate and intercessor, except the Lord Jesus alone, Clement seems to have had no knowledge. Could this have been so had those who received the Gospel from the very fountain-head been accustomed to pray to the angels, or to the holy men

⁵ Epiat. Corinth. c. xxi. and xxix.

who had finished their course on earth, and were gone to their reward?

4. SAINT IGNATIUS sealed the truth of the Gospel with his blood about seventy years after the death of our Lord. In his works, in which many passages occur most cheering and uplifting to the soul, no vestige however faint can be found of the invocation of saints or angels; whilst he prays for his fellow labourers to the Lord; and he implores them to approach the throne of grace with supplications for mercy on his soul⁶. "Long since have I prayed to God, that I might be worthy to see your faces which are worthy of God." . . . "Only pray for strength that it may be given to me from within and from without, that I may not only say but also may will; and not that I may be only called a Christian, but also may be found to be so." "Pray to Christ for me."

5. The only remaining name among those who are called Apostolical Fathers is the venerable Polycarp. He suffered martyrdom by fire at a very advanced age in Smyrna, about 130 years after our Saviour's death. In the only epistle of Polycarp that remains, addressed to the Philippians, he speaks to his brother Christians, of constant continual prayer—but he speaks only of prayer to the all-seeing God. He marks out for our imitation the good example of St. Paul, and the other Apostles, assuring us that they had not run in vain, but were gone to the place prepared for them by the Lord, as the reward of their labours. But not one word can we find alluding to the invocation of saints in prayer.

Here we must refer, though briefly, to the 'epistle from the Church of Smyrna to the neighbouring Churches, announcing the martyrdom of Polycarp, and relating the affecting circumstances which attended it. The letter purports to contain the very words of the martyr himself in the last prayer which he ever

⁶ Epistle to the Romans i. 3, 4.

⁷ Eusebius, Paris, 1628. Book i. Hist. iv. c. xv. p. 163.

offered on earth. On the subject of our present inquiry, this interesting letter, of the genuineness of which there is no ground for doubt, supplies evidence not merely negative. So far from countenancing any invocation of saint or martyr, it contains a very striking passage, the plain common-sense meaning of which bears decidedly against all exaltation of mortals into objects of religious worship. The letter is so generally known, that we may the less regret our inability to quote it at length in these pages, though every line is deeply interesting.

"The Church of God which is in Smyrna, to the Church in Philomela, and to all the branches of the Holy Catholic Church dwelling in any place, mercy, peace, and love of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ be multiplied.

"The proconsul in astonishment caused it to be proclaimed thrice, Polycarp has confessed himself to be a Christian. On this they all shouted that the proconsul should let a lion loose on Polycarp: but the games were over, and this could not be done; they then with one accord insisted on his being burnt to death."

Before his death Polycarp offered this prayer, or rather this thanksgiving to God for his mercy in thus deeming him worthy to suffer death in testimony of the Gospel.

"Father of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received our knowledge concerning Thee, the God of angels, and powers, and of the whole creation, and of the whole family of the just who live before Thee; I bless Thee because Thou hast deemed me worthy of this day and this hour, to receive my portion among the martyrs in the cup of Christ, to the resurrection both of soul and body in the incorruption of the Holy Ghost; among whom may I be received before Thee this day in a rich and acceptable sacrifice, even as Thou the true God, who canst not lie, foreshowing and fulfilling, hast beforehand prepared. For this and for all I praise Thee, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through

the eternal high-priest Jesus Christ thy beloved Son, through whom to Thee with Him in the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and for future ages. Amen."

After recounting the circumstances of his death the narrative proceeds: "But the envious adversary of the just observed the honour put on the greatness of his testimony, and his blameless life from the first, and knowing that he was now crowned with victory, resisted when many of us desired to take his body, and have fellowship with his holy flesh. Some then suggested to Nicetes the father of Herod, and brother of Dulce, to entreat the governor not to give his body, 'Lest,' said he, "leaving the crucified One, they should begin to worship this man;" and this they said at the suggestion and importunity of the Jews, who also watched us, when we would take the body from the fire. This they did, not knowing that we can never either leave Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all who will be saved in all the world, or worship any other. FOR HIM, BEING THE SON OF GOD, WE WORSHIP, BUT THE MARTYRS, AS DISCIPLES AND IMITATORS OF OUR LORD, WE WORTHILY LOVE, BECAUSE OF THEIR PRE-EMINENT GOOD-WILL TOWARDS THEIR OWN KING AND TEACHER, WITH WHOM MAY WE BECOME PARTAKERS, AND FELLOW DISCIPLES!

"The centurion," it is added, "seeing the determination of the Jews, placed him in the midst, and burnt him as their manner is. And thus we collecting his bones, more valuable than precious stones, and more esteemed than gold, deposited them where it was meet. There, as we may be able, collecting ourselves together in rejoicing and gladness, the Lord will grant to us to observe the birth-day of his martyrdom, for the remembrance of those who have before undergone the conflict, and for exercise and preparation of those who are to come."

Such is the record of the martyrdom of Polycarp, and how full is it of interesting and important suggestions! In this work of primitive antiquity we find

the prayer of a holy martyr, at his last hour, offered to God alone through Christ alone. Here we find no allusion to any other intercessor, no commending of his soul by the dying Christian to saint or angel. Polycarp pleads no other merit; he seeks no other intercession; he prays for no aid, save only his Redeemer's. How strongly does Polycarp's prayer contrast with the commendation made by Thomas à Becket of his own soul, when he was murdered in his own cathedral of Canterbury, as that commendation is recorded in the ancient Romish services for his day, to which we have referred at length in a previous number! The comparison will impress upon us the difference between religion and superstition, between the purity of primitive Christian worship, and the unhappy corruptions of a degenerate age. "To God, (such is Thomas à Becket's prayer) and the blessed Mary, and Saint Dionysius, and the holy patrons of this Church, I commend myself and the Church."

In the record of Polycarp's martyrdom we find also an explicit declaration, that Christians then offered religious worship to no one but God, while they loved the martyrs and kept their names in grateful remembrance, and honoured their ashes also when the spirit had fled.

Here too we find that the place of a Christian martyr's burial was the place which the early Christians loved to frequent; but then we are expressly told with what intent they met there—not as in later times to invoke the departed spirit of the martyr, but to call to mind, in grateful remembrance, the sufferings of those who had already endured the awful struggle; and by their example to encourage and prepare other soldiers of the cross to fight the good fight of faith, assured that they would be more than conquerors through Him who loved them.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. VII.

ON THE
INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AGAINST IT.

Continued.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

*Invocation of Saints and Angels.—Evidence of the
Primitive Church against it.*

IN the previous number, we examined those remains of Christian antiquity which are called the works of the Apostolical fathers; persons who at the very lowest calculation lived close upon the Apostles' time, and who, according to the conviction of many, had all of them conversed with the Apostles, and heard the Gospel from their mouths. We may well rejoice to find the fundamental articles of our faith witnessed by these holy men, not so much by direct and positive statements, (though we find many such,) as by what is far more satisfactory and beyond cavil, incidental, and, as they seem, unintentional allusions to those articles as familiar truths, taking them for granted as well known and received principles. Now suppose no such statements or allusions at all were found in these early documents; suppose, for example, we could find no reference to the atoning sacrifice of our Saviour's death, no incidental allusion to it, no trace of any cognizance of it on the part of the writers either as a doctrine of their own creed, or as received by their contemporary Christians; with what force of argument would the absence of all such vestiges of the doctrine be urged against the existence and prevalence of the doctrine in those times? And how, in

plain honesty, can we avoid a similar process of reasoning on the subject of the invocation of saints? If the doctrine and the practice of praying to saints or to angels for their succour, or for their intercession, had been known, and recognised, and approved, and acted upon by the Apostles, and those who were the very disciples of the Apostles, would not some plain, palpable, intelligible, and unequivocal indications of it have appeared in such writings as these? In these writings much is said of prayer, of intercessory prayer, of the one object of prayer, of the subjects of prayer, of the time and place of prayer, of the spirit in which we are to offer prayer, and the persons for whom we ought to pray; does it then accord with common sense and common experience,—with what we should expect and require in other cases, that we should find a profound and total silence on the subject of any prayer or invocation to saints and angels, if the invocation of saints and angels had been recognised, approved, and practised by the primitive Church?

If we proceed with our inquiry into the evidence left us by the Christian writers of times following the age usually assigned to the Apostolical fathers, we arrive at the same result.

Till the middle of the fourth century, or rather the closing years of it, we find no signs of the prevalence of the doctrine and practice of the worship of saints and angels. Then, unhappily, innovations began to spread through the Church itself, which had before retained the original divine doctrine of one God, to whom Christians must pray, and one Mediator and Intercessor through whom they must pray. But instead of being surprised that such innovations should have so soon prevailed, when we reflect on the general tendency of the natural man as to the objects of religious worship, and also how great is the temptation in teachers, either unenlightened or guided by a crooked policy, to accommodate the dictates of truth to the prejudices and desires of those whom they instruct, our wonder might rather be, that

Christianity was so long preserved pure and uncontaminated in this respect, than that corruptions should gradually and stealthily have mingled themselves with the simplicity of Gospel worship. The tendency of the natural man is to multiply to himself the objects of religious worship, and to create, by the help of superstition and the delusive working of the imagination, a variety of unearthly beings, whose wrath he must appease, or whose favour he may conciliate. That tendency is plainly evinced by the history of every nation under heaven; it was the same tendency which rendered such guards and fences necessary to preserve the children of faithful Abraham from its contamination; and even those laws of the Most High often failed of securing his worship from its inroads. Greek and Barbarian, Egyptian and Scythian, would have their "gods many, and their lords many." To one they would look for one good; on another they would depend for a different benefit in mind, body, and circumstances. Some were of the highest grade, and to be worshipped with supreme honours; others were of a lower rank, to whom an inferior homage was addressed; whilst a third class held a sort of middle place, and were approached with a reverence far above the least, though infinitely below the greatest. In the heathen world we find exact types of the *dulia*, the *hyperdulia*, and the *latria*, with which unhappily the practical theology of modern Christian Rome is burdened¹.

It is, indeed, a cause of wonder, that when, under the Christian dispensation, the household and local, male and female deities, the heathens' tutelary gods, and the *genii*, had been dislodged by the light of the Gospel, angels, and male and female saints, were not even at a much earlier date forced by superstition to occupy the vacated places: especially when we bear in mind

¹ In the Roman Church, the word *dulia* is said to mean the worship paid to saints and angels; *hyperdulia*, the worship paid to the Virgin; *latria*, the worship paid to God.

what powerful helps and extraordinary facilities were afforded to these external causes, by the religious proceedings which were taking place among Christians themselves at the tombs and "memories," as they were called, of the martyrs. We shall be led to refer to some passages in the early Christian writers, representing in strong but true colours, the weakness and folly of deeming a multitude of inferior divinities necessary, whose good offices we must secure by acts of attention and worship. We anticipate the observation in this place merely to remind the reader, that the ap-petency of the human mind to secure a variety of unseen protectors and benefactors, to be appeased and conciliated by man, was among the many obstacles with which the first preachers of the Gospel had to struggle. When we come to those passages, the reflection will force itself upon us, how hardly it would have been possible for those early Christian writers to express themselves in so strong, so sweeping, and so unqualified a manner (making no exceptions or limitations), had the practice of applying by invocation to saints and angels then been prevalent among the disciples of Christ. But we now proceed with our inquiry into the evidence of the primitive writers.

*Justin Martyr*², A.D. 150.

Justin, who flourished about the year 150, was trained from early youth in all the learning of Greece and Egypt. He was born in Palestine of heathen parents, and after a patient examination of the evidences of Christianity, and a close comparison of them with the systems of philosophy with which he had been familiar, he became a Christian. In those systems he found nothing solid or satisfactory; nothing

² Paris, 1742.

on which his mind could rest. In the Gospel he gained all that his soul yearned for, as a being destined for immortal life, conscious of that destiny, and longing for its accomplishment. The testimony of such a man on any doctrine connected with our Christian faith must be looked to with interest.

In Justin's works we are unable to find a single vestige of the invocation of saints. Though he speaks much on the subject of prayer, and has left some testimonies as to the primitive mode of conducting public worship, full of interest in themselves, as well as bearing on the points at issue; still no expression is found which can be construed to imply the doctrine or practice among Christians of invoking the souls of the departed. He speaks of private as well as of public prayer, and he offers prayer; but the prayer which he offers, and the prayer of which he speaks are to God alone; and he alludes to no mediator or intercessor in heaven, except only the eternal Son of God Himself. Nor is this all. Justin maintains a doctrine which utterly overturns the very foundation on which the entire theory of the invocation of saints is built. He holds that the souls of the blessed are not admitted into heaven now, but are waiting for the general resurrection; whereas the very essence of the advocacy of the saints is, that they are now in heaven with God, and reigning with Christ.

Thus in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, (sect. v.) he says, "Nevertheless, I do not say that souls all die; for that were in truth a boon to the wicked. But what? That the souls of the pious remain somewhere in a better place, and the unjust and wicked in a worse, waiting for the time of judgment, when it shall be; thus the one appearing worthy of God do not die any more; and the others are punished as long as God wills them to exist, and to be punished."

Not only so. Justin classes among renouncers of the faith those who maintain the doctrine which

is now the acknowledged doctrine of the Church of Rome, and considered indispensable as the groundwork of the invocation of saints. In the same dialogue (sect. lxxx.) he thus strongly states his sentiments, "If you should meet with any persons called Christians who confess not this, but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and say there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls at the very time of their death are taken up into heaven, do not regard them as Christians."

But whilst Justin's testimony is so full and conclusive against the invocation of saints, a passage occurs in his first Apology³, admitting of two grammatical renderings; one which places the angels between the second and third persons of the ever blessed Trinity, as objects of the Christian's reverence and worship; the other, which represents them as being taught divine truths by the Son of God. The first interpretation is so full of impiety, that we at once reject it; the second is so entirely in accordance with the sentiments of many celebrated men in the earliest times, that we feel no doubt in receiving it. The subject is, however, fully discussed in "Primitive Christian Worship," page 107; and we must, therefore, refer the reader, who desires to enter into the question more at large, to that work.

We have already said, that not a single word can be found in Justin to sanction the invocation of saints; but his testimony is far from being merely negative. He strongly admonishes us against our looking to any other being than God for help or assistance.⁴ Without any exception or modification in favour of saint or angel, he says, among various passages of similar import,—“In that Christ said, Thou art my God, go not far from me, He at the same time taught, that all persons ought to hope in God, who made all things, and seek for safety and health from Him alone.”

³ Page 47.

⁴ Trypho 102, p. 197.

*Irenæus*⁴, A.D. 180.

Justin sealed his faith by his blood about the year 165, and next to him in the noble army of martyrs, we must examine the evidence of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons. A very small proportion of his works survives in the original Greek; but that little will cause every scholar and divine to lament the calamity which theology and literature have sustained by the loss of the author's own language. We must now avail ourselves with thankfulness of the nervous, though inelegant, copy of that original, which the Latin translation, corrupt and imperfect in many parts, still affords.

There is not a single passage found in Irenæus to countenance the invocation of saints and angels; on the contrary, there is evidence which leaves no doubt that neither in faith nor practice would he sanction such invocation.

With regard to angels, we find these sentiments: "Nor does it [the Church] do any thing by invocation of angels, nor by incantations, nor other depraved and curious means, but with purity, and openness, directing prayers to the Lord who made all things; and calling upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, it exercises its powers for the benefit, and not the seducing of mankind⁴." It has been said, that by angelic invocations, Irenæus means addresses to evil angels and genii, such as the heathen superstitiously used to make. But that is a mere assumption, not warranted by the passage or its context. And surely, even were that so, had Irenæus known that Christians prayed to angels as well as to their Maker and their Saviour, he would not have used so unguarded and unqualified an expression; but would

⁴ There is a passage in Irenæus often referred to, in which a contrast is drawn between Eve and the Virgin Mary, and to that our attention will be drawn, when we inquire into the worship of the Virgin Mary.

⁴ Benedictine Ed., lib. ii. c. 32, sect. 5, p. 166.

have cautioned his readers against any misapprehension of his meaning.

Then, again, with regard to the invocation of the saints, beatified spirits of mortals supposed to be now with God, one passage is conclusive as to his faith and practice. Cardinal Bellarmin, and all who maintain the doctrine of the invocation of saints, assume that the saints are already in heaven: for, say they, if the saints are not already in the presence of God, they cannot pray for their brethren on earth, and prayer to them would therefore be preposterous⁶. But Irenæus is clear in stating the doctrine, that the souls of Christians go to the unseen place, and remain there till the resurrection and the re-union of body and soul. In the following quotation, the words printed in small capitals are found both in the Latin and the Greek copies⁷:

“Since the Lord, in the midst of the shadow of death, went where the souls of the dead were, and then afterwards rose bodily, and after his resurrection was taken up, it is evident that of his disciples also, for whom the Lord wrought these things, **THE SOULS GO INTO THE UNSEEN PLACE ASSIGNED TO THEM BY GOD, AND THERE REMAIN TILL THE RESURRECTION, WAITING FOR THE RESURRECTION; AFTERWARDS RECEIVING AGAIN THEIR BODIES, AND RISING PERFECTLY, THAT IS, BODILY; EVEN AS THE LORD ALSO ROSE AGAIN, SO WILL THEY COME INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD.** For no disciple is above his master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. As, therefore, our Master did not immediately flee away and depart, but waited for the time of the resurrection, appointed by his Father, which is evident even by the case of Jonah, after the third day rising again, he was taken up; so we, too, must wait for the time of our resurrection, appointed by God, and fore-announced by the prophets, and thus rising again, be

⁶ Bell. lib. i. c. 4, vol. ii. p. 851.

⁷ Lib. v. c. 32, sect. 2; p. 381.

taken up, as many as the Lord shall have deemed worthy of this."

Clement of Alexandria.—About the year 180.

Contemporary with Irenæus, and probably less than twenty years his junior, was Clement, the celebrated Christian philosopher of Alexandria. We are not aware that any Roman Catholic writer has appealed to the testimony of Clement, in favour of the invocation of saints: nor is there probably a passage to be found which the defenders of that practice would be likely to quote in its support; and yet there are many passages, which any one anxious to trace the true Christian faith, in this respect, would not willingly neglect. The tendency of Clement's mind to blend with the simplicity of the Gospel the philosophy with which he so fully abounded, renders him the less valuable as a Christian teacher; but his evidence as to the question of fact, Was the invocation of saints prevalent among Christians in his day, or not? is rendered even more cogent and pointed by this tendency of his mind.

Clement has left us many of his meditations on the efficacy, the duty, and the comfort of prayer. When he speaks of God and of the Christian in prayer, (for "prayer" he defines to be "communion or intercourse with God,") his language becomes often exquisitely beautiful, and not unfrequently sublime. We can only add a few detached passages; and yet those few may show, that Clement is a man whose testimony cannot be slighted.

"Therefore, keeping the whole of our life as a feast, every where and on every part persuaded that God is present, we praise Him as we till our lands; we sing hymns as we are sailing. The Christian is convinced that God hears every thing; not the voice only, but the thoughts. Suppose any one should say

that the voice does not reach God, revolving as it does in the air below; yet the thoughts of the saints cut through not only the air, but the whole world. And the divine power, like the light, is beforehand in seeing through the soul. He [the perfect Christian, whom he speaks of throughout as the man of divine knowledge] prays for things essentially good⁹.

"Wherefore, it best becomes those to pray who have an adequate knowledge of God, and possess virtue in accordance with Him—who know what are real goods, and what we should petition for, and when, and how in each case. But it is the extreme of ignorance to ask from those who are not gods, as though they were gods. . . . Whence, since there is one only good God, both we ourselves and the angels supplicate from Him alone, that good things might be either given to us, or remain with us. In this way, he [the Christian] is always in a state of purity fit for prayer. He prays with angels, as being himself equal with angels; and as one who is never beyond the holy protecting guard. And if he pray alone, he has the whole choir of angels with him¹."

Clement alludes to instances alleged by the Greeks of the effects of prayer, and he adds, "Our whole Scripture is full of instances of God hearing and granting every request according to the prayers of the just²." Having in the same section referred to the opinion of some Greeks, as to the power of demons over the affairs of mortals, he says³, "But they think it matters nothing whether we speak of these as gods, or as angels, calling the spirits of such 'demons,' and teaching that they should be worshipped by men, as having, by divine providence, on account of the purity of their lives, received authority to be conversant about earthly places in order that they may minister to mortals." Is it possible to suppose that this

⁹ Stromata, lib. vii. sect. 7, p. 851.

² Sect. iii. p. 753.

¹ Sect. xii. p. 879.

³ Lib. vi. sect. 3, p. 753.

teacher in Christ's school had any idea of a Christian praying to saints or angels? In the last passage, the language in which he quotes the errors of heathen superstition to refute them, so nearly approaches the language of the Church of Rome, when speaking of the powers of saints and angels to assist the supplicant, that we conceive if Clement had any thought whatever of a Christian praying for aid and intercession to saint or angel, he must have mentioned it, especially after the previous passage on the absurdity and ignorance of praying for any good, at the hands of any other than the one true God. In common with his contemporaries, Clement considered the angels to be, as we mortals are, in a state requiring all the protection and help to be obtained by prayer; he believed that the angels pray with us, and carry our prayers to God: but the thought of addressing them by invocation does not appear to have occurred to his mind. At the close of his "*Pædagogus*" he has left us a form of prayer to God alone, very peculiar and interesting. He closes it by an ascription of glory to the blessed Trinity. But to saint, or angel, or the Virgin, there is no allusion.

*Tertullian*⁴.—About A.D. 180.

Tertullian of Carthage, was a contemporary of Clement of Alexandria, and so nearly were they of the same age, that it has been doubted which should take precedence in point of time. There is a very wide difference in the character and tone of their works, as there was in the frame and constitution of their minds. The lenient and liberal views of the erudite and accomplished master of the school of Alexandria, stand out in broad contrast with the harsh and austere doctrines of Tertullian.

Cardinal Bellarmin calls Tertullian a heretic, and

⁴ Ed. Paris, 1675.

says he was the first heretic who denied that the saints went at once, and forthwith, to glory. We have already seen how entire a misrepresentation of the sentiments of the early fathers is conveyed in this judgment of Bellarmine. And Jerome, from whom the Roman Church is unwilling to allow any appeal, as being himself an oracle on such subjects, would lead us to form a very different opinion of the estimation in which Tertullian was held by the fathers of the early Church: for he tells us, that after Tertullian had remained a presbyter of the Church to middle age, he was, by the envy and revilings of the members of the Roman Church, driven to fall from its unity, and espouse Montanism. He also informs us, that "St. Cyprian never passed a single day without reading Tertullian, whom he called The Master, often saying to his secretary, give me The Master, meaning Tertullian."

Tertullian fell into serious errors by joining himself to Montanus. Still we see in him, throughout, traces of that spirit which animated the early converts of Christianity; and his whole soul seems to have been bent on promoting the practical influence of the Gospel. A wide distinction is drawn by Romanist writers between the works of Tertullian written before he espoused Montanism and afterwards. But this distinction does not affect his testimony on the historical fact before us. If, indeed, he held the doctrine of the invocation of saints before he took that unhappy step, and rejected it afterwards, no one conducting such an argument as the present could quote against the practice his later opinions. But we are only inquiring into the matter of fact. Is there, in the works of Tertullian, any evidence that the invocation of saints formed part of the doctrine and practice of the Christian Church in or before his time?

⁵ Jerome, ed. 1584, tom. ii. p. 183.

The following passages cannot be read but with interest:—

"We invoke the eternal God, the true God, the living God, for the safety of the emperor. Thither [heavenward] looking up with hands extended, because they are innocent; with our head bare, because we are not ashamed; in fine, without a prompter, because it is from the heart, we Christians pray for all rulers a long life, a secure government, a safe home, brave armies, a faithful senate, a good people, a quiet world. . . . For these things I cannot ask in prayer from any other except Him from whom I know that I shall obtain, because He is the one who alone grants, and I am the one who needs to obtain by prayer; his servant, who looks to Him alone, who for the sake of his religion am put to death, who offer to Him a rich and greater victim, which He has commanded, prayer from a chaste frame, from a harmless soul, from a holy spirit. . . . So let hoofs dig into us, let crosses suspend us, let fires embrace us, let swords sever our necks from the body, let beasts rush upon us; the very frame of mind of a praying Christian is prepared for every torment. This do, good presidents! tear ye away the soul that is praying for the emperor!"

In the opening of his reflections on the Lord's Prayer, we find these words:—

"Let us consider, therefore, beloved, in the first place, the heavenly wisdom in the precept of praying in secret, by which He required in a man faith to believe, that both the sight and the hearing of the Omnipotent God is present under our roofs, and in our secret places; and desired the lowliness of faith, that to Him alone, whom he believed to hear and to see every where, he would offer his worship?"

We will only add Tertullian's solemn profession of his faith, the last clause of which, though in perfect accordance with the sentiments of his contemporaries,

⁶ Apolog. sect. xxx. p. 27.

⁷ Page 129.

seems to have been regarded unfavourably by modern writers of the Church of Rome, because it bids us look to the day of judgment for the saints being taken to the enjoyment of heaven; and consequently implies, that they cannot be properly invoked now. "To profess now what we maintain: by the rule of our faith we believe that God is altogether one, and no other than the Creator of the world, who produced all things out of nothing by his Word first of all sent down: that that Word, called his Son, was variously seen by the patriarchs in the name of God; was always heard in the prophets, at length borne by the Spirit and power of God the Father into the Virgin Mary, was made flesh in her womb, was born of her, and was Jesus Christ. Afterwards He preached a new law, and a new promise of the kingdom of heaven; wrought miracles, was crucified, rose again the third day, and being taken up into heaven, sat on the right hand of the Father; and He sent in his own stead the power of the Holy Ghost to guide believers: that He shall come with glory to take the saints to the enjoyment of eternal life, and the heavenly promises, and to condemn the impious to eternal fire, making a reviving of both classes with the restoration of the body."

Origen, A.D. 230.

Jerome informs us that Tertullian lived to a very advanced age. Long before his death, flourished Origen, one of the most celebrated lights of the primitive Church. He was educated a Christian. Indeed his father is said to have suffered martyrdom about A.D. 202. Origen was a pupil of Clement of Alexandria. His virtues and his labours have called forth the admiration of all ages; and what still remains of his works will be delivered down as a rich treasure to future ages. He was a most voluminous writer,

† De Præscript. Hæret. sect. xiii. p. 206.

and Jerome' asked the members of his Church, Who is there among us that can read as many books as Origen composed? A large proportion of his works are lost; and of those which remain few are preserved in the original Greek. We are often obliged to study Origen through the medium of a translation, of which we have no means of verifying the accuracy. A difficult and delicate duty also devolves upon the theological student to determine which of the works attributed to Origen are genuine, and which are spurious; and what parts moreover of the works received as genuine came from his pen. While we trust in this examination of his evidence to appeal to no work which is not confessedly his, nor to exclude any passage not decidedly spurious, we must refer the reader for a statement of reasons for rejection or admission of the several writings in detail, to the work above adverted to, "*Primitive Christian Worship*," lately adopted on the Catalogue of the Society, p. 103, &c. and 151, &c.

Proceeding, then, in our inquiry into the testimony of Origen, we would premise, that no doubt can be entertained of his having believed angels to be ministering spirits, fellow labourers with us in the momentous work of our salvation. He represents the angels as members of the same family with ourselves, as worshippers of the same Lord, as servants of the same Master, as children of the same Father, as disciples of the same heavenly Teacher, as learners of one and the same heavenly doctrine. He contemplates them as members of our Christian congregations, as joining with us in prayer to our heavenly Benefactor, and as taking pleasure when they hear in our assemblies what is agreeable to the will of God. But does Origen, therefore, countenance any invocation of angels? Let his own words testify.

Celsus accused the Christians of being Atheists;

* Vol. iv. Epist. 41, p. 346.

godless men, without God in the world, because they would not worship those "gods many, and lords many," and those secondary, subordinate, and ministering divinities with which the heathen mythology abounded. Origen answers, We are not godless, we are not without an object of our prayer; we pray to God Almighty alone through the mediation of his only Son. "We must pray to God alone, who is over all things; and we must pray also to the only-begotten and first-born of every creature, the Word of God; and we must implore Him, as our High Priest, to carry our prayer, first coming to Him, to his God and our God, to his Father and the Father of those who live agreeably to the Word of God¹." But Celsus, in this well representing the weakness and failings of human nature, still urged on the Christian the necessity, at all events the expediency, of conciliating these intermediate beings, who executed the will of the Supreme Being, and might haply have much left at their own will and discretion to give or to withhold; and securing their good offices by prayer. To this Origen answers, "The one God—the God who is over all is to be propitiated by us, and to be appeased by prayer—the God who is rendered favourable by piety and all virtue. But if he, Celsus, is desirous to propitiate, after the Supreme God, some others also, let him bear in mind, that just as a body in motion is accompanied by the motion of its shadow, so also it follows that a person, by rendering the Supreme God favourable, has all Gods (his) friends, angels, souls, spirits, favourable also; for they sympathize with those who are worthy of God's favour. And not only do they become kindly affected towards the worthy, but they also join with those in their work, who desire to worship the Supreme God: and they propitiate Him, and they pray with us, and supplicate with us; so that we boldly

¹ Cont. Cels. vol. i. sect. 8, c. 26, p. 761.

say, that together with men, who on principle prefer the better part, and pray to God, ten thousands of holy powers join in prayer UNCALLED UPON [UN-ASKED, UNINVOKED].

If Christians in Origen's time called upon, invoked, asked the angels of Heaven to aid them in their pilgrimage, what an opportunity had Origen here (not only naturally offering itself, but even forced on him) to state, that though Christians do not call upon demons and the inferior divinities of heathenism, yet that they do call upon the ministering spirits, the holy angels, messengers, and servants of the Most High God! But while speaking of them, and magnifying the blessings derived to man through their ministry, so far from encouraging us to ask them for their good offices, his testimony is not merely negative against such a proceeding; but he positively asserts, that when they assist mankind, it is without any request or prayer from man. Could these sentiments have come from one who invoked angels?

On Origen's testimony as to the invocation of the souls of saints departed, a few words will suffice, for he plainly records his belief, that the faithful are still waiting for us; and that till we all rejoice together, their joy will not be full.

We must, however, first advert to a passage in Origen's treatise on prayer, alleged with much confidence; as important and explicit evidence in proof of that father's having supported the doctrine of the invocation of saints. This supposed testimony of Origen is thus cited:—

“He comments on 1 Tim. ii. 1, ‘I desire, therefore, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving, be made for all men.’ He says, that intercessions and thanksgiving may be made to men,

³ On this same point the reader is referred to many most convincing passages in Origen's works, among the rest, *Cont. Cel.* vol. i. lib. viii. sect. 89, p. 786; lib. v. sect. 4, p. 672; lib. viii. sect. 34, p. 786.

but that supplications are only to be offered to the saints, whilst prayers are due to God alone. He teaches that we may supplicate a Peter or a Paul to assist us, and make us worthy to profit by the power given to them to remit sin. And he argues *à fortiori* from this that Christ is to be supplicated."

Now, in answer to this most strange perversion of Origen's meaning, we need only put his own words side by side with this comment, to show that the commentator has laid before us a totally mistaken view of the primitive father's sentiments. Origen is here speaking not one word of the saints in glory with Christ in heaven, or any supplication to them; he is referring solely to the addresses which a Christian may make to his fellow-creatures here on earth. With the accuracy of his elaborate distinctions between the several words of St. Paul, and with the soundness of his doctrine in another point of view our argument has no concern. He refers in this passage to the authority given to Christ's holy ones, the ministers of his Church on earth, to absolve the penitent; and to the propriety of the penitent supplicating at their hands such absolution; but that this passage has nothing whatever to do with the invocation or supplication of the saints in bliss by mortals on earth, the words of the passage themselves will be the best proof. Origen's words are these:—

"Supplication, and intercession, and giving of thanks, it would not be improper to offer even to *holy* men; yet the two, I mean intercession and giving of thanks, may be offered not only to the holy, but also to *all* men; but SUPPLICATION only to the holy, IF ANY ONE MAY BE FOUND a Paul or Peter, in order that they may benefit us by making us worthy to partake of the authority given to them for the remitting of sins. Still, however, even though a person be not holy, and yet we have injured him, it is allowable for us, becoming conscious of our wrong towards him, to SUPPLICATE even such an one, to grant pardon to us

who have injured him. But if we ought to offer these to HOLY MEN, how much more must we give thanks to Christ, who hath, by the will of the Father, conferred on us so great benefits?"

And yet, in the present day, this passage is triumphantly quoted as the crowning evidence of the second and third century in favour of the invocation by men on earth of the saints reigning with Christ in heaven³!

But to proceed. In his seventh homily on Leviticus, we read, "Not even the apostles have yet received their joy; but even they are waiting, in order that I also may become a partaker of their joy. For the saints departing hence do not immediately receive all the rewards of their deserts; but they are also waiting for us, though we be delaying and dilatory. For they have not perfect joy, so long as they grieve for our errors, and mourn for our sins." Then having quoted the Epistle to the Hebrews, he proceeds, "You see, therefore, that Abraham is yet waiting to obtain those things that are perfect; so is Isaac and Jacob; and so are the prophets all waiting for us, that they may obtain with us eternal blessedness. Wherefore, even this mystery is kept to the last day of delayed judgment."

Again we may ask, Could the following passage have come from the pen of one, who prayed to the saints as already reigning with Christ in heaven, able to succour us, and to forward the salvation of us on earth?

"Whether the saints who are removed from the body, and are with Christ, act at all, and labour for us, like the angels who minister to our salvation?

³The two words in italics, "holy" and "all," are restored by the editors of Origen's works, as necessary to be supplied: the addition of them does not affect our argument. See Benedictine Ed., vol. i. p. 221. See also the annotations in the same edition, copied from the edition of a "Learned Englishman."

Let this be considered among the secret things of God, mysteries not to be committed to writing *."

These, and very many other passages of a similar tendency stand out in striking contrast with those passages from the spurious works attributed to Origen, which have thoughtlessly and unjustifiably been cited by Roman Catholics of the present day, as evidences of Origen on the other side. We cannot but refer, for example, to the citation made by Dr. Wiseman in his Lectures delivered in Moorfields' Chapel, in 1836, of a passage from a work ascribed to Origen on The Lamentations, of which Huet, the learned and celebrated Roman Catholic Bishop of Avranches, quoted at large by the Benedictine editors in 1733, thus pronounces his opinion, "It is wonderful that, WITHOUT ANY NOTICE OF THEIR BEING FORGERIES, they should be sometimes cited in evidence by some theologians." To the work thus condemned (and that not only by the Bishop of Avranches, but by all theological scholars,) an appeal is now made in these words, "Again he (Origen) thus writes on The Lamentations, 'I will fall down on my knees, and not presuming on account of my crimes to present my prayer to God, I will invoke all the saints to my assistance. Oh, ye saints of Heaven, I beseech you with a sorrow full of sighs and tears, fall at the feet of the Lord of mercies for me, a miserable sinner!'"

As long as theologians in high station in the Church of Rome will "cite in evidence, without any notice of their being forgeries," such forgeries as these; and as long as people will receive such evidence, there can be no end to controversy on any question. But is not the time coming when such quotations, made either in ignorance, or carelessness, or design, on any side, will bring with them their own antidote?

* Epist. ad Rom., lib. ii. vol. iv. p. 479. See Hom. III. vol. iii. 372.

*St. Cyprian*⁵, A.D. 258.

In the middle of the third century, Cyprian⁶, a man of substance, and a rhetorician of Carthage, was converted to Christianity. He was then fifty years of age, and his learning, virtues, and devotedness to the cause which he had espoused, soon raised him to the dignity, the responsibility, and the danger of the episcopate. Many of his writings, of undoubted genuineness, are preserved, and they have been appealed to in every age as the works of a faithful son of the Church of Christ. On the subject of prayer he has written powerfully and affectingly; but after the most careful examination of his works, especially of those passages to which Roman Catholics used to appeal, we are unable to find a single expression, which can be made to imply that he practised or countenanced the invocation of saints and angels.

In one passage⁷, he exhorts certain living virgins to encourage themselves by mutual exhortations, to remain firm, to conduct themselves spiritually, and gain the end happily, finishing his exhortation thus, "Only remember us then, when your virgin-state shall begin to be honoured." Whatever be the meaning of the last words, the persons addressed were still alive on earth, and their case therefore does not bear on the question before us.

Another instance to which an appeal has been made is equally inapplicable. Cyprian, at the close of his letter to Cornelius, puts before us a beautiful act of friendship and brotherly affection, deserving the imitation of every Christian brother and friend. The supporters of the invocation of saints consider Cyprian as suggesting to his friend, that whichever of the two should be first called away, he would continue, when in heaven, to pray for the survivor on earth. Suppose it for a moment to be so, the request is made in writ-

⁵ Benedict. Paris, 1726.

⁶ Jerem., vol. iv. p. 342. ⁷ P. 177.

ing, from a living man to a living man, and has nothing whatever to do with our praying, on earth, to one who is already dead, and gone to his reward. But Cyprian's words suggest a very different meaning, namely, that the two friends should continue to pray each in his place, mutually for each other, and for their friends, and relieve each other's wants and necessities whilst both survived; and whenever death should remove the one from earth to happiness, the survivor should not forget their bond of friendship, but should still continue to pray to God for their brothers and sisters. The passage translated to the letter runs thus⁸: "Let us be mutually mindful of each other, with one mind and one heart. On both sides, let us always pray for each other, let us by mutual love relieve each other's pressures and distresses; and if either of us, from hence, by the speed of the Divine favour, go on before the other, let our love persevere before the Lord; for our brothers and sisters, with the Father's mercy, let not prayer cease. My desire, most dear brother, is that you may always prosper⁹." Bishop Fell thus comments on the passage, "The sense seems to be, When either of us shall die, whether I, who preside at Carthage, or you, who are presiding at Rome, shall be the survivor, let the prayer to God, of him whose lot shall be to remain longest among the living, persevere and continue." "Meanwhile," continues the Bishop (whom the Benedictine editors call "the most illustrious Bishop of Oxford"), "we by no means doubt that souls admitted into heaven apply to God, the best and greatest of beings, that He would have compassion on those who are dwelling on the earth. But it does not thence follow, that prayers should be offered to the saints: THE MAN WHO PETITIONS THEM MAKES THEM GODS¹."

⁸ Epist. 57, p. 96.

⁹ The reader will find this passage examined more fully in "Primitive Christian Worship."

¹ Deos qui rogat ille facit. Oxford, 1682, p. 143.

We have room here for only one of those beautiful passages with which Cyprian's works abound, and to the sentiments of which every Christian will respond. It is at the close of the address by which he comforted and exhorted his fellow-Christians during the plague that raged at Carthage in the year 252.

“ We must consider, most beloved brethren, and frequently reflect, that we have renounced the world, and are meanwhile living here as strangers and pilgrims. Let us embrace the day which assigns each to his own home; which restores us to Paradise and the kingdom of heaven, snatched from hence, and liberated from the entanglements of the world. What man, when he is in a foreign country, would not hasten to return to his native land? . . . We regard Paradise as our country. We have begun already to have the patriarchs for our parents. Why do we not hasten and run, that we may see our country, and salute our parents? There a large number of dear ones are waiting for us, of parents, brothers, and children; a numerous and full crowd are longing for us, already secure of their own immortality, and still anxious for our safety. To come to the sight and the embrace of these, how great will be the mutual joy to them and to us! What a pleasure of the kingdom of heaven is there, without the fear of dying, and with an eternity of living! How consummate and never-ending a happiness! There is the glorious company of the apostles, there is the assembly of the exulting prophets, there is the unnumbered family of the martyrs, crowned for the victory of their struggles and sufferings! There are virgins triumphing, who, by the power of chastity, have subdued the lusts of the flesh and the body! There are the merciful recompensed, who, with food and bounty to the poor, have done the works of righteousness, who, keeping the Lord's commands, have transferred their earthly inheritance into heavenly treasures! To these, O most dearly beloved brethren, let us hasten with most eager

longing; let us desire that our lot may be to be with them speedily, to come speedily to Christ. Let God see this to be our thought; let our Lord Christ behold this to be the purpose of our mind and faith, who will give more abundant rewards of his glory to them whose desires for Himself have been the greater."

Lactantius ², A.D. 300.

Cyprian suffered martyrdom about the year 260. Towards the close of the same century, and at the beginning of the fourth, flourished Lactantius. He was intimately conversant with classical learning and philosophy. As Jerome³ informs us, before he appeared as an author, he taught rhetoric in Nicomedia; and afterwards, in extreme old age, he became tutor of Cæsar Crispus, son of Constantine, in Gaul.

Among the writings of Lactantius enumerated by Jerome, he mentions the book "On the Anger of God," as a most beautiful work. The supporters of the adoration of spirits and angels allow that his testimony is decidedly against them; they do not refer to a single passage in their favour, and their chief desire is to depreciate his merits. We need quote only one or two passages from this learned man:—"God hath created ministers whom we call messengers [angels]—but neither are they gods, nor do they wish to be called gods, or to be worshipped, as being those who do nothing beyond the command and will of God⁴."

In his work on a Happy Life, we find this conclusive evidence against the whole doctrine of the invocation of saints:—"Nor let any one think that souls are judged immediately after death. For all are kept in one common place of guard, until the time come when the great Judge will institute an inquiry into their deserts. Then those whose righteousness shall be approved

² Ed. Lenglet Dufresnoy, 1748.

³ Jerom., vol. iv. part 2, p. 119. Paris, 1706.

⁴ Vol. i. p. 31.

will receive the reward of immortality; and those whose sins and crimes are laid open shall not rise again, but shall be hidden in the same darkness with the wicked—appointed to fixed punishments.” This testimony is generally considered to be of the date 317.

Eusebius ⁵, A.D. 314.

The evidence of Eusebius on any subject connected with primitive faith and practice, cannot be regarded without deep interest. He flourished about the beginning of the fourth century, and was Bishop of Cæsarea, in Palestine. His writings were voluminous, and diversified in their character. But in his works, historical, biographical, controversial, or by whatever other name any of them may be called, overflowing as they are with learning, both philosophical and scriptural, we find no one single passage to countenance the doctrine of the invocation of saints or angels, whether the request were that they would grant us any favour, or would pray for us.

Bellarmin and others indeed quote three passages on the invocation of saints and angels. The first is cited to show that the souls of the saints are removed forthwith from earth to heaven. In this instance the translation is entirely wrong; the words of Eusebius being “And such was the struggle of the celebrated virgin, which she accomplished;” which Bellarmin quotes thus, “In this manner the blessed Virgin Potamiana migrated from earth to heaven.”

In the second passage the misquotation is far more serious. Eusebius, marking the resemblance, in many points, between Plato’s doctrine and Christianity, makes this observation on the reverence due, as Plato holds, to the good departed. “And this corresponds

⁵ Ch. xxi. p. 574.

⁶ Camb. 1720, and Paris, 1628.

⁷ Bellarmin, vol. ii. p. 354. Eusebius, Cantab., vol. i. lib. vi. c. 5, p. 263.

with what takes place on the death of those lovers of God whom you would not be wrong in calling the soldiers of the true religion. Whence also it is our custom to proceed to their tombs, and **AT THEM** (the **TOMBS**) to make our prayers, and to honour their blessed souls, inasmuch as these things are with reason done by us." This Bellarmin thus quotes, "These things we do daily, who honouring the soldiers of true religion as the friends of God, approach also to their tombs, and make our **PRAYERS TO THEM**, as to holy men, by whose intercession to God we profess to be not a little aided *."

The third quotation is from the letter from the Church of Smyrna relating the martyrdom of Polycarp; and the misquotation is for the purpose of taking off the edge of the evidence borne by that letter against the worship of saints. The Christians of Smyrna declare, without any limitation or qualification, that they could never worship any fellow mortal, however honoured or beloved; but the Paris edition interpolates the word "as God" after "worship," implying that they would offer a secondary worship to a saint. Again, whereas Eusebius, in contrasting the worship paid to Christ with the feelings of Christians towards a martyr, employs the word "love," Bellarmin (following in this Ruffinus) interpolates the word "worship," "we love and worship" (*diligimus et veneramur*). The latter word, though often used by ancient writers to mean the religious worship offered by man to God, might undoubtedly be used to signify the reverence properly shown towards holy men. Still, how lamentable is it to attempt to maintain any cause by such tampering with ancient testimonies!

Eusebius gives us the same view of the feelings and sentiments of the primitive Christians towards the holy angels as we have already found in Origen and the other Fathers of the Church.

* Bellarmin, vol. ii. p. 902. Euseb. Paris, vol. i. lib. xiii. c. 11, p. 613. Cantab., vol. i. p. 163.

“ In the doctrine of his Word we have learned that there exist, after the Most High God, certain powers, in their nature incorporeal and intellectual, rational and purely virtuous, who keep their station around the Sovereign King—the greater part of whom, by certain dispensations of salvation, are sent by the will of the Father even as far as to men : whom indeed we have been taught to know and to honour according to the measure of their dignity, rendering to God alone, the Sovereign King, the honour of worship :” “ Knowing those divine Powers which serve and minister to the Sovereign God, and honouring them as far as it is becoming, but confessing God alone, and Him alone worshipping’.”

Apostolical Canons and Constitutions.

The works known by the name of the Apostolical Canons and Apostolical Constitutions, though confessedly not productions of the Apostolic age, have been always held in much esteem. The most learned writers fix their date at a period not more remote than the beginning of the fourth century. A perusal of these documents, especially the Constitutions, will supply the reader with convincing evidence that the invocation of saints was not then practised in the Church. Minute rules are given for the conducting of public worship ; forms of prayer are prescribed to be used in the Church by the Bishops, and Clergy, and by the people ; forms of prayer and thanksgiving are recommended for the use of the faithful in private, at night, in the morning, and at their meals ; forms too there are of creeds and confessions ; but not one single allusion to any religious address to saint or angel. Again and again prayer is directed to be made to the one living and true God, and that exclusively through the mediation and intercession of the

^b See Cotelierius, vol. i. p. 194. 424. Beveridge, in the same vol. p. 427. Conc. Gen. Florence, 1759, tom. i. p. 29. 254.

one only Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord. Honourable mention is made of the saints of the Old Testament, and the Apostles and Martyrs of the New. Directions are also given for the observance of their festivals; but not the shadow of a thought appears that their good offices could benefit us, much less the most distant intimation that Christians might invoke them for their prayers and intercessions.

In Book v. c. 7, we read an exceedingly interesting dissertation on the general resurrection; but not one word of saint or angel being beforehand admitted to glory; on the contrary, the declaration is distinct, that not the martyrs only, but all men will rise. Surely such an opportunity would not have been lost of stating the doctrine, that the martyrs were already reigning with Christ in heaven, had such been at that early period the doctrine of the Church.

In Book viii. c. 13, we find this exhortation, "Let us remember the holy martyrs, that we may be counted worthy to be partakers of their conflict." Not a word occurs about Christians asking them to pray in heaven for their brethren on earth.

St. Athanasius, A.D. 350.

Athanasius, the renowned and undaunted defender of the Catholic faith, was born about the year 296, and after presiding in the Church as Bishop for more than forty-six years, died about A.D. 373, approaching his eightieth year.

It is impossible for any one interested in the question, What is the truth on these subjects? to look with indifference on the belief and practice of this primitive Christian champion. On the subject of our present investigation, few among the early writers of the Church have been so seriously and recklessly misrepresented as St. Athanasius. Bellarmin and others cite him as a witness in favour of the invocation of

saints¹, but the passages are from works confessedly spurious. Since, however, the principal passage relates to the blessed Virgin Mary, it is thought desirable to postpone our examination of it till the evidence against the Romish worship of the Virgin comes under our review.

A careful and upright study of the remains of St. Athanasius cannot but impress us with the right and scriptural views taken by him of the Christian's hope and confidence being in God alone. The glowing fervour of his piety centered only in the Lord; his sure and certain hope in life and in death anchored only on the mercies of God, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

But while there is not found a single passage in Athanasius to countenance the invocation of saints, many of his expressions and arguments go far to demonstrate that such a belief, and such a practice, as are now acknowledged and insisted upon by the Church of Rome, were neither adopted nor sanctioned by him. He repeatedly speaks of the exclusion of angels and men from any share in the work of man's restoration, without any expressions to qualify his assertions, or to preserve them from being misunderstood. He directs our thoughts to holy men and holy fathers as our examples, in whose footsteps we ought to tread, but not the least intimation occurs that they ought after death to be invoked².

We have not, however, space for many extracts from this great authority; but to one the reader's patient and impartial thoughts are invited. It occurs in his third oration against the Arians, where he is proving the unity of the Father and the Son from St. Paul's expressions (1 Thess. iii. 11). The argument at large will amply repay a careful examination; its opening sentences are these:

“Thus then again, when he is praying for the

¹ Book viii. p. 475.

² See vol. i. part i. p. 58. 285.

Thessalonians, and saying, 'Now our God and Father himself, AND the Lord Jesus Christ direct our way to you,' he preserves the unity of the Father and the Son. For he says not 'may THEY DIRECT,' as though a twofold grace were given from Him AND Him, but 'may HE direct,' to show that the Father giveth this through the Son. . . . Thus no one would pray to receive any thing from God AND the angels, or from any other created being: nor would any one say, May God AND the angels give it thee; but from the Father and the Son, because of their unity and the oneness of the gift. For whatever is given, is given through the Son—nor is there any thing which the Father works except through the Son: for thus the receiver has the gracious favour without fail. But if the patriarch Jacob, blessing his descendants, Ephraim and Manasseh, said, 'The God who nourished me from my youth unto this day, the angel who delivered me from all the evils, bless the lads;' he does not join one of created beings, and by nature angels, with God who created them; nor, dismissing Him, God, who nourished him, does he ask the blessing for his descendants from an angel, but by saying, He who delivered me from all the evils, he showed that it was not one of created angels, but the Word of God; and joining Him with the Father, he supplicated Him through whom God delivers whom He wills. For he used the expression, knowing Him, who is called the Messenger of the great counsel of the Father, to be no other than the very one who blessed and delivered from evil. For undoubtedly he did not aspire to be blessed himself by God, while he was willing for his descendants to be blessed by an angel. But the same whom he addressed, saying, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me' (and this was God, as he says, I saw God face to face), Him he prayed to bless the sons of Joseph. The peculiar office of an angel is to minister at the appointment of God; and often he went on before to cast out the Amorite, and was sent to

guard the people on the way ; but these are not the doings of him, but of God who appointed him, and sent him, and to whom it belongs to deliver whom He wills."

"For this cause David addressed no other on the subject of deliverance but God Himself. But if it belongs to no other than God to bless and deliver, and it was no other that delivered Jacob than the Lord Himself, and the patriarch invoked for his descendants Him who delivered him, it is evident that in his prayer he joined no one except His Word, whom he called an angel for this reason, because He alone reveals the Father."

"But this no one would say of beings produced and created; for neither when the Father worketh does any one of the angels, or any other of created beings work the things; for no one of such beings is an effective cause; but they themselves belong to things produced. The angels, then, as it is written, are ministering spirits sent to minister; and the gifts given by Him through the Word they announce, to those who receive them."

Now, if the invocation of angels had been practised by the Church at that time, can it for a moment be believed that a man of such a mind as was the mind of St. Athanasius, clear, cultivated, logical, with ardent zeal for the doctrines of the Church, and fervent piety, would have sent forth such passages as these, without one saving or modifying clause in favour of the invocation of angels? He tells us, that they act merely as ministers, ready indeed and rejoicing to be employed on errands of mercy, but not going one step or doing one thing without the commands of God. Had the thought of the lawfulness, the duty, the privilege, the benefit of invoking them, been present to the mind of St. Athanasius, could he have dispensed with the introduction of some words to prevent his expressions from being misunderstood and misapplied?

We close the catalogue of our witnesses down to the Council of Nice with the testimony of St. Athanasius, whose genuine and acknowledged works afford not one jot or tittle in support of the doctrine and practice of the invocation of saints and angels, as now insisted upon by the Church of Rome; and the direct tendency of whose evidence is decidedly hostile both to that doctrine and that practice.

It may be right in this place to observe, that in order to escape from such a conclusive argument against the invocation of saints, as Bishop Fell's would be if left unanswered, viz. that it is making them gods, investing them with the attribute of omnipresence, the defenders of that doctrine have had recourse to several expedients explanatory of the manner in which the saints in heaven may be supposed to become acquainted with the prayers addressed to them by Christians on earth. Cardinal Bellarmine (vol. ii. p. 735) enumerates four chief modes adopted by his fellow-believers, two of which he pronounces to be inadequate, and therefore to be rejected; of the other two, that which he considers the less tenable and right in itself, he recommends to be adopted, because heretics have less vantage ground from which to assail it.

The first opinion, he says, is, That angels carry up the prayers to the saints, and bring down the answers and blessings.

The second is, That angels and glorified spirits are endowed with such swiftness of motion, that they can in a way be present and hear different prayers uttered in different places at the same time.

But the Cardinal objects, that neither of these views can hold, because not swiftness of motion, but true and real ubiquity would be necessary; and to ascribe that property to saints and angels, he felt would be to invest them with the attribute of God himself.

The third theory, and that which he most ap-

proves, is, That the saints, at the very commencement of their blessedness, have imparted to them, by God, a knowledge of all the prayers, that will be addressed to them, together with all that can happen relating to themselves; so that when the prayer is afterwards at any time uttered, though they do not hear it, they know it, and receive it, and act upon it.

The fourth, he says, is, That the saints do not thus see our prayers from the beginning of their own blessedness, but that God reveals our prayers to them when and as we utter them.

On these two last the Cardinal makes the following remarkable reflections:—The former, he says, seems in itself simply the more probable; because, if according to the latter supposition, the saints needed a new revelation every time a prayer was addressed to them, the Church would not so boldly say to all the saints, “Pray for us,” but would, sometimes, ask of God to reveal our prayers to them. In the next place, he says, were this latter theory held, a reason could not be so easily given, why the saints should be now invoked, though they were not invoked before the coming of Christ! Yet this latter opinion, though not in itself the best, may, nevertheless, be better calculated to convince heretics; for they would not admit the former view, since they think that the saints do not see God before the day of judgment; but they cannot reject this latter view, because though the saints do not see God, yet he may still reveal our prayers to them.

To such unworthy expedients are men driven, when they leave the word of God, as the only authority without appeal, and teach as essential doctrines the inventions of men!

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. VIII.

ON THE
WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN
MARY.

DOCTRINE, AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES
OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published:—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

Doctrine and Authorized Services of the Church of Rome.

ON the title of the present number we would offer a few prefatory words, to prevent any misunderstanding of either the principles or the subject of our inquiry. The word "worship" admits of various significations, implying sometimes merely the respect which one human being may entertain towards another, and sometimes the highest religious and divine honour which a creature can render to the supreme Lord of the universe. We are consequently admonished, on the ground of common justice, not to charge the Romanists with a spiritual offence in paying "worship" to a creature, but rather to attach to their words "worship" and "adoration" those ideas only which are naturally suggested by what they say and do. In the justice of this warning we acquiesce; and, in one point of view, our first proceeding in this treatise is, we hope, a dispassionate inquiry into the very nature and kind of worship which is actually offered to the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome.

In pursuing this subject honestly and reverently, surely we need not lie under the suspicion of believing that "the cause of the Son of God is to be pro-

There is, however, one feature in the Roman worship of the Virgin, to which our thoughts will be especially drawn by the examination on which we are now entering. Its direct tendency, as practically illustrated in the works of accredited divines of the Church of Rome, and in the devotional exercises prepared for the daily use of the people, is to make the Almighty Himself an object of fear, and the Virgin an object of love; to invest Him, who is the Father of mercy and God of all comfort, with unapproachable majesty and awe, and with the terrors of eternal justice; and then, in direct and striking contrast, to array Mary with mercy, and benignity, and compassionate tenderness, and omnipotence in her love. But so far is our heavenly Father from terrifying us and repelling us from Himself by alarming representations of his overwhelming and unapproachable majesty, that his own word abounds with assurances and representations of a directly opposite tenour: the Bible invites us to regard Him and to draw nigh to Him in full assurance of faith, not only as a God of love, but as Love itself, and moreover, as exercising his feeling of love toward us individually. "The God of love shall be with you¹." "The Father Himself loveth you²." "God is love³." "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." And so far is the same holy Volume from suggesting to us the necessity or expediency of our applying to some mediator and advocate, who "not uniting the divine with the human nature, as the Son of God and man does in his person, but, being simply human, might more intimately sympathize with our weaknesses and wants," that it is impossible for language to express more strongly and plainly the entire completeness and perfectness of our Divine Redeemer's advocacy and

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

² 1 John iv. 8.

³ John xvi. 27.

mediation, exclusive of all others. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins⁴." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them⁵." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things⁶?" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full⁷." "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus⁸." "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me⁹."

How entirely opposed to such blessed intimations as these, breathing the spirit that pervades the Scriptures throughout, are those doctrines which represent the Virgin Mary as the mediator through whom and by whom we must sue for the Divine clemency; as the dispenser of all God's blessings and graces; as the sharer of God's kingdom, leaving to Him the department of vengeance, and taking mercy to herself; as the fountain of pity, as the moderator of the Almighty's justice, and the appeaser of his wrath.

"Compel God to have mercy upon sinners." "Show thyself to be a mother." "By thy right of mother, command thy Son." "Calm the rage of thy heavenly husband." "If any one feels himself aggrieved by the justice of God, let him appeal to Mary." "God is a God of vengeance, but thou, Mary, dost incline to be merciful." "Thou approachest before the golden altar of human reconciliation, not asking only, but commanding: a mistress, not a handmaid."

⁴ 1 John ii. 1. Heb. iv. 8, 9.

⁵ Heb. vii. 25.

⁶ Romans viii. 32.

⁷ John xvi. 23, 24.

⁸ Gal. iii. 20.

⁹ John xiv. 6.

Now, in drawing attention to such results of the Romish system as these, which shock our feelings, and from which our reason turns away, while we think of God's perfections, and the full atonement and all-powerful intercession of our blessed Redeemer, our object is not to fasten such sentiments on any professed Roman Catholic who may disavow them; it is to impress on all persons some idea of the excesses into which even celebrated teachers are tempted to run, when once they allow the smallest inroad to be made upon the integrity of God's worship; and at the same time to caution our countrymen against encouraging in any way that revival of the worship of the Virgin, to promote which the highest authorities of the Church of Rome have lately expressed their anxiety. Though these excessive departures from Gospel truth and the primitive worship of one God through one Mediator, may be disowned by some who still profess to be in communion with the Church of Rome; yet, as we shall now see, they are the tenets of her chief doctors, who though dead yet still speak with authority, men who were raised to her highest dignities in their lifetime, and were solemnly enrolled among her canonized saints after death, and to whose words and actions appeals continue to be made at the present day. But even in their mildest and least startling forms, the doctrines and practices of Rome in the worship of the Virgin are awfully dangerous; and well does it become every one who loves the truth in sincerity to avoid whatever may even seem to countenance them.

Before we proceed to ascertain from the testimony of men whose writings are in a measure stamped with authority, the actual doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome in the worship of the Virgin, one more of the many examples, meeting us on every side, which characterize her public worship, seems to require some notice. The service adverted to appears

to take a sort of middle station between the enjoined formularies, and the devotions of individuals, or family worship. On the one hand it partakes too much of a public character to be viewed in the light of private religious exercises; on the other, not being found in the Breviary, it seems to be without that authority which would rank it among the liturgical offices of their Church. The service is performed with great ceremony in the churches; a priest presides; the host is presented for the adoration of the people, and a sermon is generally preached. The service is performed (in Paris, for example) every evening through the month of May, and is celebrated expressly in honour of the Virgin. For not only is the Saturday in every week (with some exceptions), dedicated to her, but in every year the month of May is called "Mary's month." Temporary altars are raised to her, surrounded by flowers and evergreens, and adorned with garlands and drapery, her image usually standing in a conspicuous place before the altar¹⁰. Societies or guilds are formed chiefly for the celebration of the Virgin's praises, who bear the chief parts in these religious festivities. A collection of religious poems used in the churches in Paris on these occasions is dedicated, "To the glory of Jesus and Mary¹¹." Many of its hymns are addressed exclusively to the Virgin without a shadow of reference either to the Son of God the only Saviour, or to the Almighty, who will not share his glory with another. The following is a literal translation of one of the hymns:—

"Around the altars of Mary, Let us her children press.
To that mother so endeared, Let us address the sweetest prayers.
Let a lively and holy mirth Animate us on this holy day:

¹⁰ The whole service painfully reminds us, that the Institution took its rise in the Floralia of Pagan Rome.

¹¹ Nouveau Recueil de Cantiques à l'usage des Confréries des Paroisses de Paris, 1839.

There exists no sadness For a heart full of her love.
 Let us adorn her sanctuary with flowers ; Let us deck her revered
 altars ;
 Let us redouble our efforts to please her. Be this month consecrated
 to her.
 Let the perfume of these crowns Form a delicious incense,
 Which, ascending even to her throne, May carry to her both our hearts
 and our prayers.
 Let the holy name of Mary Be unto us a name of salvation ;
 Let our softened soul Ever pay to her a sweet tribute of love ;
 Let us join the choir of angels The more to celebrate her beauty ;
 And may our songs of praise Resound in eternity.
 O holy Virgin ! O our mother ! Watch over us from the height of
 Heaven !
 And when from this sojourn of misery We present our prayers to you,
 O sweet, O divine Mary ! Lend an ear to our sighs ;
 And after this life, Make us to taste of deathless pleasures ²."

It is lamentable to find among these hymns shocking proof that those corruptions of the faith which in former years, as we shall now see, drew the contrast in favour of the Virgin and against God, with reference to the attribute of mercy, are adopted by her present worshippers. The hymn on the Assumption represents the Eternal Father as Mary's husband full of rage, who must be softened by her influence into tenderness towards her votaries.

" Vouchsafe, Mary, on this day To hear our sighs,
 And second our desires. Vouchsafe, Mary, on this day
 To receive our incense, our love :
 OF THY HEAVENLY HUSBAND CALM THE RAGE,
 Let Him show Himself kind To all those that are thine !
 Of thy heavenly husband calm the rage ³ :
 Let his heart be softened towards us ⁴."

The course of our argument now leads us to examine the works of some among the canonized saints and acknowledged doctors of the Church of Rome.

² Page 175.

³ The word here translated "rage" is in the original "courroux," which, as lexicographers tell us, "breathes highly of vengeance or punishment."

⁴ Page 183.

Bonaventura.

Among the most remarkable monuments of past years are the devotional works of Bonaventura; and it is difficult to conceive how any Church can give the impress of its own name and approval in a fuller or more unequivocal manner to the productions of any human being, than by the process adopted by the Church of Rome in stamping her authority on the works of this her canonized saint.

In the "*Acta Sanctorum*," Bonaventura is said to have been born in 1221, and to have died in 1274. He was of the Franciscan order, and passed through all the degrees of ecclesiastical dignities, short only of the pontifical throne itself. Pope Clement IV. in 1265 offered to him the Archbishopric of York, which he declined; but Gregory X. elevated him to the dignity of cardinal-bishop. More than two centuries after his death, his claims to canonization were urged upon Sixtus IV., who pronounced him a saint in 1482. That Pope in his diploma declares that the proctor of the order of Minors had proved that the blessed Trinity testified to the fact of Bonaventura being a saint in Heaven; the Father proving it by the miracles wrought on him and by him, the Son by the wisdom of his doctrine, the Holy Spirit by the excellence of his life. The Pontiff then adds in his own words, "He so wrote on divine subjects, that the HOLY SPIRIT SEEMS TO HAVE SPOKEN IN HIM."

This testimony of Sextus IV. is referred to by Pope Sextus V., who more than a century after the canonization of Bonaventura, and more than three centuries after his death, ordered his works to be "most carefully emendated." This Pope's decretal letter, 1588, pronounced Bonaventura to be

¹ *Acta Sanctorum*, Antwerp, 1723, July 14, pp. 811—823. 831. 837.

² The edition of Bonaventura's works here used was published at Mentz in 1609; and the passages referred to occur in vol. vi. between pp. 400 and 500.

an acknowledged doctor of holy Church, and directed his authority to be cited in all places of education, and in all ecclesiastical discussions and studies. Plenary indulgence also is promised, in the same act, to all who assist at the mass on his feast in certain specified places. In these documents Bonaventura is called the "Seraphic Doctor;" and it may be again asked whether it is possible for any human authority to give a more entire and unreserved sanction to the works of any human being than the Church of Rome has actually given to the works of Bonaventura? And what do these works present to us on the invocation and worship of the Virgin Mary?

Bonaventura's Psalter.

In the first place, taking every one of the hundred and fifty psalms singly, he so changes the commencement of each as to address them, not as the inspired Psalmist did to the Lord God Almighty, but to the Virgin Mary, interspersing in some cases much of his own composition, and then adding to each the "Gloria Patri." A few examples will suffice.

In the 30th Psalm, "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted, let me not be confounded for ever," &c., this Psalter of the Virgin substitutes these words:—

"In thee, O Lady, have I trusted, let me not be confounded for ever; in thy grace take me.

"Thou art my fortitude and my refuge; my consolation and my protection.

"To thee, O Lady, have I cried while my heart was in heaviness; and thou didst hear me from the top of the eternal hills.

"Bring thou me out of the snare that they have hid for me; for thou art my succour.

"Into thy hands, O Lady, I commend my spirit, my whole life and my last day."

In Psalm 31 we read, "Blessed are they whose hearts love thee, O Virgin Mary; their sins shall be mercifully blotted out BY THEE."

In Psalm 35, "Incline thou the countenance of God upon us; COMPEL HIM to have mercy upon sinners. O Lady, thy mercy is in the heaven, and thy grace is spread over the whole earth."

In Psalm 67, instead of "Let God arise," &c. this Psalter has, "Let Mary arise, and let her enemies be scattered."

In the opening of the 98th Psalm there is what we cannot but regard as an impious and blasphemous comparison of the supreme God and the Virgin, drawing the contrast in favour of Mary and against God, in reference to the very attribute which in HIM shines first and last and brightest—his eternal mercy.

"The Lord is a God of vengeance; but thou, O Mother of Mercy, inclinest to be merciful."

The penitential Psalm (129th) is thus addressed to Mary:

"Out of the depths have I called to thee, O Lady: O Lady, hear my voice. Let thine ears be attent to the voice of my praise and glorifying: deliver me from the hands of my enemies; confound their imaginations and attempts against me. Rescue me in the evil day, and in the day of death forget not my soul: carry me unto the haven of salvation: let my name be enrolled among the just."

As the penitential Psalms were thus turned from HIM to whom the inspired penman addressed them, so are his hymns of praise to God constrained through the same channel to flow to the Virgin. Thus in the 48th Psalm we read:

"Praise our Lady of Heaven; glorify her in the highest. Praise her, all ye men and cattle, ye birds of the heaven and fishes of the sea. Praise her, sun and moon; ye stars and circles of the planets. Praise her, Cherubim and Seraphim, thrones, dominions, and powers. Praise her, all ye legions of angels. Praise her, all ye orders of Spirits on high."

The last sentence of the Psalm is thus perverted:

"Let every thing that hath breath praise our Lady."

May God hasten the time when the only reading in Christendom shall again be in the words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel :

"Let every thing that hath breath praise **THE LORD!**"

For various examples of the same perversion of Holy Scripture, and of the miserable distortion of Christian Hymns (especially the *Te Deum*) and Creeds and Litanies, made by Bonaventura, substituting as he does the Virgin Mary as the object of belief and prayer and praise for the only God and his only Son, we must refer to the work on the Catalogue of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, "*The Romish Worship of the Virgin.*" We would only remark, that in his unhallowed parody on the Athanasian Creed, the assumption of the Virgin into heaven, which is proved to have no foundation whatever in fact, is specified as one of the points to be believed on pain of forfeiting all hopes of salvation.

At the close of one of his Canticles he thus addresses the Virgin :

"O thou blessed one, our salvation is placed in thy hands. Remember our poverty, O thou pious one. Whom thou willest, he shall be saved ; and he from whom thou turnest away thy countenance, goeth into destruction."

In his *Te Deum* are these words :

"O Lady, **SAVE THY PEOPLE**, that we may partake of the inheritance of thy Son ;

"And govern us and guard us for ever.

"Vouchsafe, O sweet Mary, to keep us now and for ever without sin.

"Have mercy upon us, O pious one, have mercy upon us. Let thy mercy be magnified upon us, because in thee, O Virgin Mary, do we put our trust ; in thee, sweet Mary, do we hope. Defend us for ever. Praise becomes thee. Empire becomes thee. To thee be virtue and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Can the most subtle refinement make this merely a request to her to pray for us ?

To this catalogue of prayers and praises we will only add the translation of one prayer more from the same canonized Saint. Its existence has been denied, but there it stands in his works, admitted as genuine by the Vatican editors. Vol. vi. p. 406.

“Therefore, O Empress, and our most benign Lady, BY THE RIGHT OF A MOTHER COMMAND THY MOST BELOVED SON, our Lord Jesus Christ, that He vouchsafe to raise our minds from the love of earthly things to heavenly desires, who liveth and reigneth.”
“JURE MATRIS IMPERA tuo dilectissimo filio.”

If such a man as Bonaventura, one of the most learned and celebrated men of his age, could be tempted by the seductive doctrine of the Roman Church to employ such language, what can be fairly expected of the large mass of persons who find that language published to the world with the very highest sanction which their religion can give, as the production of a man whom the Almighty declared by miracles to be a chosen vessel, and who was so under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit seemed to speak by him; and concerning whom they are taught, by the infallible⁷ testimony of his canonization, that he is now reigning with Christ in heaven, and himself the lawful and appointed object of religious invocation?

While the devotional works of Roman Catholic writers abound to the overflow with such miserable errors as these, the writings of their expositors and accredited teachers are to the full as pregnant with the same lamentable departures from Christian truths. Referring for other examples to the work above-mentioned, “The Romish Worship of the Virgin,” we shall here confine ourselves to two authors, whose partial sameness of name has not unnaturally led to some confusion as to the writings of each.

⁷ Cardinal Bellarmin, vol. ii. p. 871, states, that in the act of canonization the Church of Rome is infallible,

Bernardinus De Bustis.

Bernardinus, called from a place in the country of Milan, De Bustis, was the author of "The Office of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin," which was confirmed by the bull of Sixtus IV., and has since been used on the 8th of December. He composed various works in honour of the Virgin, to one of which he gave the title *Mariale*. In this work, among a great variety of sentiments of similar import, he thus expresses himself :

"Of so great authority in the heavenly palace is that Empress, that, omitting all intermediate saints, we may appeal to her from every grievance. With confidence let every one appeal to her, whether he be aggrieved by the devil or by any tyrant, or by his own body, or by DIVINE JUSTICE." Then, having illustrated the three other sources of grievance, he proceeds:—"In the fourth place he may APPEAL TO HER, if any one feels himself aggrieved by the JUSTICE OF GOD. The Empress Esther was a figure of this Empress of the Heavens with whom God divided his kingdom. For whereas God has justice and mercy, He retained justice to Himself, to be exercised in this world, and granted mercy to his mother; and thus, if any one feels himself aggrieved in the court of God's justice, let him appeal to the court of mercy of his Mother^s."

If we weigh the import of these words, is it any thing short of robbing the Eternal Father of his own eternal attribute, and sharing his glory with another? Is it not encouraging us to turn our eyes from the God of Mercy, as a stern and ruthless judge, and habitually to fix them on Mary, as the dispenser of all we want for the comfort and happiness of our souls?

In another place this Bernardine thus exalts Mary: "Since the Virgin Mary is Mother of God, and God

^s Cologne, 1607, Part iii. Serm. ii. p. 170.

is her Son, and every son is naturally inferior to his mother, and the mother is preferred above and is superior to her son, it follows that the Blessed VIRGIN IS HERSELF SUPERIOR TO GOD, and GOD HIMSELF IS HER SUBJECT by reason of the humanity derived from her." And again: "O the unspeakable dignity of Mary, who was worthy to command the Commander of all *!"

We cannot pass on without translating one more passage from this famed doctor; it appears to rob God of his justice and power, as well as of his mercy, and to turn our eyes to Mary for the obtaining of all we can desire, and for safety from all we can dread.

"We may say that the Blessed Virgin is Chancellor in the Court of Heaven. For we see that in the Chancery of our Lord the Pope, three kinds of letters are granted: some are of simple justice, others are of pure grace, and the third mixed, combining justice and grace. The third Chancellor is he to whom it appertains to give letters of pure grace and mercy. And this office hath the blessed Virgin, and therefore she is called the Mother of Grace and Mercy; but these letters of mercy she gives only in the present life; for to some souls, as they are departing, she gives letters of pure grace; to others, of simple justice; and to others, mixed, namely, of justice and grace. For some have been very much devoted to her, and to them she gives letters of pure grace, by which she COMMANDS that glory be given to them without any fear of purgatory; others are miserable sinners, not devoted to her, and to them she gives letters of simple justice, by which she COMMANDS that condign vengeance be done upon them; others were lukewarm and remiss in their devotion, and to them she gives letters both of justice and of grace, by which she COMMANDS that grace be given unto them, and yet on

* Part ix. Sermon. ii. p. 605. Part xii. Sermon. ii. p. 816.

account of their negligence and sloth some pain of purgatory be also inflicted on them ¹."

Bernardinus Sennensis.

This Bernardine, distinguished as "of Sienna," was a canonized saint. A full account of his life, and of his enrolment by the Pope among the saints of heaven, is found in the "*Acta Sanctorum*," vol. v. May 20, the day especially dedicated to his honour. This Roman saint and doctor is explicit in maintaining that all the blessings which Christians can receive on earth are dispensed by Mary; that her principedom equals the Eternal Father's; that all are her servants and subjects who are the servants and subjects of the Most High; that all who adore the Son of God should adore his Virgin Mother; and that the Virgin has repaid the Almighty for all that HE has done for the human race. Some of these doctrines are truly startling, and it is painful to rehearse them; but it seems necessary to probe the evil. A few examples however will suffice:—

"So many creatures do service to the glorious Mary as do service to the Trinity; for He who is the Son of God and of the Blessed Virgin, wishing (so to speak) to make the principedom of his Mother equal in a manner to his Father's, He who was God served his Mother on earth. Moreover this is true, all things, even the Virgin, are servants of the Divine empire; and again this is true, all things, even God, are servants of the Empire of the Virgin ²." "Therefore all the angelic spirits are the ministers and servants of this glorious Virgin ³." "To comprise all in a brief sentence, I have no doubt that God granted all the pardons and liberations in the Old Testament on account of his love and reverence for this blessed maid, by which God pre-ordained from eternity that she should by predestination be honoured above all his

¹ Part xii. Serm. i. p. 825.

² Paris, 1636, vol. iv. Serm. v. c. vi. p. 118.

³ Serm. iii. c. iii. p. 104.

works. On account of the immense love of the Virgin, Christ Himself, as well as the whole blessed Trinity, frequently grants pardon to the most wicked sinners⁴."

"By the law of succession and right of inheritance, the primacy and kingdom of the whole universe is due to the Blessed Virgin. Nay, when her only Son died on the cross, since He had no one on earth of right to succeed Him, his mother, by the laws of all, succeeded, and by this acquired the principality of all. . . But of the monarchy of the universe, Christ never made any testamentary bequest, because that can never be done without prejudice to his mother. Moreover, He knew that a mother CAN ANNUL THE WILL OF HER SON, if it be made to the prejudice of herself⁵."

"The Virgin-mother, from the time she conceived God, obtained a certain jurisdiction and authority in every temporal procession of the Holy Spirit, so that no creature could obtain any grace of virtue from God, except according to the dispensation of his Virgin-mother. . . . I fear not to say, that the Virgin has a certain jurisdiction over the flowing of all graces. And because she is the mother of such a Son of God, who produces the Holy Spirit, therefore all the gifts, graces, and virtues of the Holy Spirit are administered by the hands of HERSELF, to whom she will, when she will, how she will, and in what quantity she will⁶."

"She is the Queen of Mercy, the Temple of God, the habitation of the Holy Spirit, always sitting at the right hand of Christ in eternal glory; therefore she is to be venerated, to be saluted, to be adored with the adoration of hyperdulia; and she therefore sits at the right hand of the King, that as often as you adore Christ the King, you may adore also the mother of Christ."

"The Blessed Virgin Mary has done more for God, or, so to speak, as much as God has done, for the whole human race. I verily believe that God will excuse me, if I now speak for the Virgin. Let us,

⁴ Serm. v. c. ii. p. 116.

⁵ Serm. v. c. vii. pp. 116. 118.

⁶ Serm. v. c. viii.; and Serm. vi. c. ii. pp. 120. 122. 119. 121.

then, gather into one heap what things God hath done for man; and let us consider what satisfaction the Virgin Mary hath returned to the Lord." Bernardine then enumerates various particulars (many of which the ordinary feelings of reverence and delicacy forbid us to transfer into these pages), putting one against another, in a sort of debtor and creditor account, and then summing up the total thus:—

"Therefore setting each individual thing one against another, namely, what things God hath done for man, and what things the Blessed Virgin has done for God, you will see that MARY HAS DONE MORE FOR GOD THAN GOD HAS FOR MAN; so that thus, on account of the Blessed Virgin (whom, nevertheless He Himself made), GOD IS, IN A CERTAIN MANNER, UNDER GREATER OBLIGATIONS TO US THAN WE ARE TO HIM!"

These are not the sentiments of some ordinary writer, for the soundness of which the Church of Rome could not be held responsible; they are the doctrines of one whom the Pope (Nicholas V.), in full conclave, enrolled among the saints of heaven, on the day of Pentecost, 1450, and that, as we are expressly told, to the joy of all Italy! Pius II. said, ten years afterwards, that this Bernardine was taken for a saint, even in his lifetime; and soon after the end of another ten years, Sixtus IV. issued a bull, in which he extolled this saint, and authorized the removal of his body into a new church, dedicated, as others had been, to his honour; and he is now a lawful object of invocation himself to those who worship saints and the Virgin.

Theophilus Raynaud.

In bringing these references to a close, we cannot but invite especial attention to the work of Theophilus Raynaud, a Jesuit of Lyons, which supplies us with evidence as singular and curious as it is conclusive, on the enormous excesses to which the worship of the Virgin Mary has been carried in the Church of Rome. We have already intimated, that those excesses and

extravagancies, when brought to light, exceed all that we have been accustomed to meet with in books and in conversation. So revolting are many of them, that Romanist writers have not been wanting to regard the exposure and refutation of them as a pious work, due even to the Virgin herself, in order to preserve what they deem her legitimate worship from disparagement and ridicule. It is indeed curious to find these very writers, while they bring before us a mass of superstition and idolatry and blasphemy, with the existence of which we might not otherwise have become acquainted, and while they expose and reprove what they call unwarrantable excesses in the votaries of Mary, yet themselves supplying us with the strongest and most convincing evidence of the deplorable extent to which, even with the countenance and support of their own arguments and their own example, the worship of the Virgin, in its most modified form, entrenches upon the honour due to God only, and tempts Christians to anchor on Mary that holy hope which should rest only on Christ Himself.

One of the professed principles of this work of Raynaud, called *Diptycha Mariana*, is to reduce within reasonable bounds the worship of the Virgin, and to explode those excesses which, by exciting disgust or suspicion, might endanger what he maintains as her rightful praise and glory. But fearing lest his intention should be misinterpreted, he makes first an explicit profession of his sense of the boundless merits of the Virgin, to express which he adopts the words of a former writer. "The torrents of heaven, and the fountains of the great deep, I would rather open than close, in homage of the Virgin. And if HER SON JESUS HAS OMITTED any thing as to the pre-eminence of the exaltation of his own mother, I, a servant, I, a slave, not indeed with effect, but with affection, would delight in filling it up. Verily I had rather have no tongue, than say one word against our Lady; I would rather have no soul, than diminish aught of her glory*."

* Lugduni, 1665, vol. vii. p. 4.

Many of the dissertations examined by this author, on which men have dared to enter, as to the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God, we cannot here quote, even to reprove them, without setting at nought both piety and delicacy. They warn us, at every step, to avoid all curiosity on such mysteries, and never to pry into those things which belong to the Lord our God. And of the many vain questions savouring of ensnaring superstition, we can refer only to a few. Among those numerous tenets which Raynaud records as having been maintained by the votaries of the Virgin, but which he discountenances himself, are these:—"That the Virgin had rescued and snatched some souls out of hell, that they might do penance". "That the very flesh of the Virgin is adored daily in the Church with supreme worship, and is a victim offered to God, for a sacrifice of sweet savour to the Lord, because her flesh is one with Christ's¹," and "is to be worshipped in the eucharist with the adoration of hyperdulia²." "That, by reason of her maternity, the Virgin may be worshipped with the worship with which God is Himself worshipped—the adoration of latria³;" and he tells us that both Suarez and Mendoza maintained this doctrine.

He disapproves of the sentiment (a sentiment by no means confined to the author whom he cites, and whose works he says had immense circulation), that Christians love Christ on account of, and in consequence of, the love which they bear to his mother. He quotes this address to our Lord—"I love Thee, O Christ God, because of thy mother whom I love⁴."

St. Ildefonsus, he tells us, "with a faithful presumption and pious boldness," extended the power of the Virgin to hell, saying that "she granted to the damned some remedy and refreshing, and freedom from the vexation of the devils, on the day of her Assumption⁵."

¹ P. 15.² P. 237.³ P. 65.⁴ P. 229.⁵ P. 235.⁶ P. 228.

One of the main objects of this member of the College of Jesuits was to condemn what he deemed excessive and extravagant in the acts of worship and adoration which he witnessed in his predecessors or contemporaries; we must therefore infer, that while his own practice, at all events, did not exceed the average, it may fairly be supposed to fall below it. And what does he profess to allow or to maintain? or what worship does he feel himself justified in offering to the Virgin? Although many more passages are at hand, we need quote only two, one which he calls "a pious daily form of worshipping and religiously invoking the Blessed Virgin in private," supplied by Richard of St. Lawrence; the other the closing words of his work, in which he declares it to be his delight to address to the Virgin a hymn in imitation of the *Te Deum*.

The first he thus explains:—"The will of the Son is, that we should bless his mother our Sovereign Lady at all times, by night and by day, in prosperity and adversity; and that her praise should ever dwell in our heart and in our mouth, by meditating upon her, by praising her, by praying, blessing, and giving thanks to her, by preaching forth her greatness; and that her praise should ever be as a curb in our jaws, curbing us in from the vices of the tongue. Wherefore SHE ALSO HERSELF PROMISES WITH HER SON, to him who praises her, 'with my praise will I curb thee, that thou perish not⁶.' Also that thou mayest fulfil that Psalm, 'All that is within me bless HER holy name'. And daily are her [bodily] members to be individually blessed, that we may receive back a blessing to our members individually from her. In the same manner are her feet to be blessed, with which she carried the Lord; the womb in which she carried Him; the heart whence she courageously believed in Him and fervently

⁶ Isaiah xlviii.

⁷ Ps. cii. The word '*ejus*' is ambiguous; but the sense is fixed by the '*ab eâ*' in the next line.

loved Him ; the breasts with which she gave Him suck ; the hands with which she nourished Him ; the mouth and tongue with which she gave to Him the happy kiss of our redemption ; the nostrils with which she smelled the sweet-smelling fragrance of his humanity ; the ears with which she listened with delight to his eloquence ; the eyes with which she devoutly looked upon Him ; the body and soul which Christ consecrated in her with every benediction. And these most sacred members must be saluted and blessed with all devotion, so that separate salutations must be addressed to the several members separately ; that is to say, ' Hail, Mary ! ' two to the feet, one to the womb, one to the heart, two to the breasts, two to the hands, two to the mouth and tongue, two to the lips, two to the nostrils, two to the ears, two to the eyes, two to the soul and body. And thus in all there are twenty salutations, which, after the manner of a daily payment, with separate and an equal number of kneelings, if it can be done, before her image or altar, are to be paid to the glorious Virgin, according to that Psalm, ' Every day will I give thanks unto THEE, and praise THY name for ever and ever '.* And as those persons say who have experienced it, and have heard it from holy men, scarcely can be found any other form of service which would so much please the Virgin, or from which so much devotion would flow back to those who love her. Likewise through all her members separately, after the kneeling, adoration, and salutation, this must be said, ' Sweet Lady, I adore and bless those most blessed feet, by which thou didst carry the Lord upon the earth ; I adore and bless that most blessed womb in which thou didst carry Him ; ' and so to the other members and senses, commemorating their acts by which they served the Lord ; and this will devotion prescribe better than a discourse, grace better than writing †."

* Ps. cxliv.

† P. 232.

This, be it remembered is a branch of Mary's worship, approved and recommended by one whose professed object was to shorten and limit and purify her worship, and reduce it within reasonable bounds. Can we any longer wonder at the dreadful blasphemies which meet us on every side, too dreadful many of them to be repeated, but still upon record? If one who reproves those that indulge in extravagant and excessive worship of the Virgin will himself calmly and deliberately sanction such condensed superstition as the above service involves, what must have been the extravagancies and excesses which he condemned? Here the worshippers of the Virgin are directed to perform daily a peculiar service to her, in order that they might fulfil the prophetic measure of the Psalmist's devotions, when he called upon his soul and all within him to bless God the Lord Jehovah! Here it is declared that it was "Mary with her Son," who made that promise to her votaries of safety from destruction, which promise, whatever it be, the inspired word of truth declares to have been made not by Mary, but by the Lord omnipotent. In the passage of Isaiah containing the promise now ascribed to the Virgin first (though her Son is joined with her), God, the speaker and the promiser, announces Himself to be "the first and the last." The Bible declares the speaker to be God Almighty; this writer substitutes Mary for God; and although her ever-blessed Son is named as joining in the promise, yet it is to the offering of praise to Mary and not to Christ, that the promise is applied here.

In his accommodation of the *Te Deum* to the Virgin Mary, Raynaud, following the example of Bonaventura, addresses to her these words:—

"We praise thee, Queen of Heaven; we honour thee, Sovereign Lady of the world.

"All creatures of right praise thee, Mother of immense splendour, Chamber of the Trinity most High.

“Thou art the beloved daughter of the Eternal Father; thou art the Elect Mother of the Son of God, and also the Holy Bride of the Comforter.

“Thee all angels obey. Thee the heavens of heavens love inestimably.

“To thee Cherubim and Seraphim cry aloud with ineffable voice, ‘Hail, hail, hail, O Lady of Glory; the heavens and earth are full of the sweetness of thy grace.’

“Thou art the Queen of the Apostles, thou the teaching of the Evangelists. Thee the praiseworthy company of the Prophets, thee the band of Patriarchs worship.

“Thou art the victory of martyrs, thou the glory of confessors. Thee the roses of Paradise, glorious virgins, praise; as do the chaste in their choir, singing, ‘Hail, O sweetest Queen; rejoice, O our most worthy Mother, who pourest grace upon the Saints, and deliverest souls from the depths.’

“We sinners, therefore, beseech thee, O Mother of God, help that people whom the precious blood of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, redeemed.

“MAKE us to be numbered with *THY* Saints in glory most high.

“Through thee may we, O holy Mother, be deemed worthy to be piously comforted.

“Thou who art crowned with so many prerogatives of holiness in the glory of the Father, rejoicing by thy right of Mother in so many privileges of dignity, joy, rejoice, be glad, who art greater than all praise, O merciful, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary.”

As his closing expression, the author says:—

“May these be my words through the whole of this life; and may I, with the holy angels, break forth into the same through all eternity.”

And then adopting the words of Damiani, he adds, “I have treated concerning Christ; I have treated concerning his mother. Sweet is the Lord; sweet is the Lady: because He my God is my mercy, she my Lady is my gate of mercy. May the mother conduct

us to her Son, the daughter to the Father, the bride to her husband, who is blessed for evermore. Amen¹."

Can any refinement take from these words the character of a direct prayer to the Virgin for benefits in her power to bestow? Can Raynaud's address be freed from an ascription of Divine attributes to Mary? In the very words in which the Christian Church has been long wont to seek for God's mercy and to praise Him, does this author ask for the Virgin's help, and proclaim her praises!

And yet this is the worship offered to the Virgin by one who puts himself forward as a pattern of moderation and prudence in her worship. "Others among her votaries," he says, "flew through the air, while he was contented to walk on foot as long as he remained on earth; others poured forth words like torrents in her praise, he weighed his words in the balance of judgment."

The writer's evidence is unexceptionable; it cannot be suspected, and it is conclusive.

¹ P. 240.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.

PART II.

**PRESENT SENTIMENTS AND PRACTICE.
IN THE CHURCH OF ROME.**

WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

Present Sentiments and Practice in the Church of Rome.

It may, however, perhaps be surmised, that the authors above cited having lived so many years ago, the sentiments of those who profess the Roman faith now have undergone many changes. Assurances have, moreover, been given from time to time, that the invocation of the Virgin implies nothing more than a request that she would intercede with God for her supplicants, just as one Christian may ask a brother on earth to pray for him¹. We can, however, discover no satisfactory method of reconciling with this representation the form of prayer and the sentiments which meet us on every side. We have already seen what the offices of the Virgin Mary in the Breviary and the Missal still contain. We find the same sentiments expressed towards her by the chief men in the Roman Church; the same forms of devotion both in prayer and praise are provided for the use of individuals in their daily exercises. Whatever meaning may possibly be attached to the expressions written or uttered (and surely in the most holy and solemn of all things, religious worship, it is dangerous and unjustifiable to employ one language for the ear and

¹ See Sermon by Dr. Baines at Bradford, July 27, 1825, p. 15.

eye, and another for the understanding and the heart), the prevailing expressions remain the same as we have found them to have been in past ages.

At the head of these modern proofs we reasonably place the circular letter of the present Pope, addressed to all Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops, through which the spirit of the Virgin's worship seems to diffuse itself in its full strength. When we refer his words to a test which has been already applied to a similar case, it is difficult for us to see how the spirit of this Pontiff's sentiments falls in the least below the highest grade of religious worship. In the third paragraph of this letter we read these words²:

"But having at length taken possession of our see in the Lateran Basilic, according to the custom and institution of our predecessors, we turn to you without delay, venerable brethren, and in testimony of our feelings towards you, we select for the date of our letter this most joyful day on which we celebrate the festival of the most Blessed Virgin's triumphant assumption into heaven; that she, who has been through every great calamity our patroness and protectress, MAY WATCH OVER US WRITING TO YOU, AND LEAD OUR MIND BY HER HEAVENLY INFLUENCE to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock."

For the name of the Virgin let us substitute the holiest name of all, and let us fix on Christmas day, or Easter, or Holy Thursday; and what word, expressive of thankfulness for past mercies to the supreme Giver of all good, or of hope and trust in the guidance of the Spirit of counsel, and wisdom, and strength, who alone can order the wills and ways of men, might not a Christian pastor take from this declaration of the present Pope, to use in its first and

² We adopt the translation of the letter as circulated in the *Manian Annual*, called the "*Laity's Directory*," for the year 1833.

natural sense, when he was speaking of the Lord God Almighty? However direct and immediate the prayers of any supplicants may be to the Virgin for her protection and defence from all dangers, spiritual and bodily, and for the guidance of their inmost thoughts in the right way, such petitioners to Mary would be sanctioned to the utmost by the principles and examples of the present Roman Pontiff.

The next example of the worship of the Virgin at this day to which we would refer, is that of a writer who was canonized by the present Pope so recently as the year 1839, Alphonsus Liguori. He died in 1787, and the Congregation of Rites at Rome pronounced his works uncensurable, and Pope Pius VII. in 1803, approved of their sentence. In his works we find sentiments the same with those already cited from the Bernardines, Bonaventura, and others of former days, and which show that the worship of the Virgin is now what it was four or five centuries ago.

Alphonsus Liguori, in the estimation of Roman Catholics, is an authority of no ordinary value. Dr. Wiseman speaks of him as a "venerable man," "a pattern and a light," "whose life and writings inspire us," he says, "with an admiration scarcely surpassed by that which we feel towards the early lights of the Church;" and his work called, "The Glories of Mary," is recommended in Ireland as a manual for all the faithful. He must, therefore, be considered as speaking the sentiments, not only of the Court of Rome and of the Pope who canonized him, but also especially of the bishops and clergy of Rome ministering at present in these islands. The following passages, with numberless others of the same character, occur in that work³:—

"If Ahasuerus heard the petition of Esther through

³ "The Glories of Mary, mother of God, translated from the Italian of blessed Alphonsus Liguori," Dublin, 1833.

love, will not God, who has an infinite love for Mary, fling away at her suit the thunderbolts which He was going to hurl on wretched sinners? . . . Indeed, every petition she offers is as a LAW emanating from the Lord, by which HE OBLIGES Himself to be merciful to those for whom she intercedes⁴."

"St. Anselm, to increase our confidence in Mary, assures us that our prayers will often be more speedily heard in invoking her name, than in calling on that of Jesus Christ⁵."

"Dispensatrix of the Divine grace, you save whom you please: to you, then, I commit myself, that the enemy may not destroy me⁶."

"We, Holy Virgin, hope for grace and salvation from you; and since you need but say the word, Ah! do so, you shall be heard, and we shall be saved⁷."

The searcher after truth on the subject of our present inquiry is often distressed on finding modern writers making reference to works which have been long since condemned as spurious, and citing them in evidence as genuine productions. But the most perplexing cases of all occur, when persons of note and authority cite the testimony of the ancient fathers without giving any clue to the passage in which the alleged testimony is contained. Of this, very striking instances occur in the works of Alphonsus Liguori, to a few of which it will not be out of place to point here.

"Before Bonaventura, St. Ignatius had pronounced that a sinner can be saved ONLY by having recourse to the Blessed Virgin, whose INFINITE mercy obtains salvation for those who would be condemned by infinite justice. Some pretend that the text is not taken from Ignatius, but we know that St. Chrysostom attributes it to him⁸."

"With what efficacy, with what tender charity does not Mary plead our cause! From the considera-

⁴ Pp. 16, 17. ⁵ P. 96. ⁶ P. 100. ⁷ P. 137. ⁸ P. 190. .

tion thereof, St. Augustine says to her, ‘Men have but one sole advocate in heaven, and it is you, Holy Virgin.’”

“Poor sinners, how lamentable would be your lot, if you had not this powerful advocate; this advocate so wise, so prudent, and so tender, that her Son CANNOT condemn those whom she defends¹!”

“The glorious St. Gratian affirms, that though we may ask as many graces as we please, we cannot obtain them but through the intercession of Mary. St. Antoninus says, ‘To ask favours without interposing Mary, is to attempt to fly without wings.’”

“Mary,” says St. Chrysostom, “has been elected from all eternity as mother of God, that she may save by HER mercy those to whom her Son, in justice, cannot grant pardon².”

This book, “The Glories of Mary,” was not written by a person living centuries ago, amidst those whose excesses Theophilus Raynaud wrote his book to check and discountenance; it contains the sentiments of one who has been dead not sixty years, and to whose teaching the highest authority in the Church of Rome only seven years since set its seal by its most solemn act of all, even his canonization. And what is the doctrine here proclaimed and spread through the world? That the mercy of Mary is infinite, and obtains salvation for those whom God in his infinite justice would condemn: that the Lord Jesus, whose own gracious lips assure us that the merciful Father of us all sent Him into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, whatever be his will, CANNOT condemn those whom she defends: and though the Holy Scripture assures us that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is also the propitiation for our sins, yet here we are told that the Virgin is our sole advocate in heaven. Whereas the

^{*} P. 170.

¹ P. 171.

² P. 154.

³ P. 179.

Lord Himself declares, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in MY name, that will I do;" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in MY name, He will give it you";" this saint of the Roman Church tells us we may ask what we will, but that without Mary's intercession we can obtain no grace. The warrant of the heavenly covenant is, "that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," and that "in Him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins;" but here we are taught that Mary is to save by HER MERCY those to whom her Son cannot in justice grant pardon.

These are, indeed, very startling positions, deplorable departures from the truth as it is in Jesus: and when we find an appeal made to St. Ignatius, St. Chrysostom, and St. Augustine, in defence of these doctrines, we cannot conceal our feelings of astonishment and sorrow. For the authorities here cited by Liguori most diligent search has been made, and not a trace of either of them can be found. In no one of the works of Ignatius can any allusion to such a position be discovered; and though Liguori says, "We know that St. Chrysostom attributes the text to Ignatius," every other part of the writings of St. Chrysostom, as well as his biographical work on St. Ignatius, has been ransacked for any allusion to such a statement, but in vain. For the testimony also here directly drawn from St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine, their works have been searched with unremitting scrutiny, but with the same result. Not a shadow of any such doctrine can be detected. In neither of these, nor in St. Ignatius, is there found any the most distant allusion to the mercy, the intercession, or the advocacy and saving power of Mary. Their uniform teaching is, that the Eternal Father is infinite in mercy, and will freely pardon believing penitents who come to Him by his ever-merciful Son.

* John xiv. 13; xvi. 23.

We need add only a few more examples from devotional books which are in use at the present day. Such examples might be multiplied exceedingly, but the subject is too painful for us to dwell longer upon it than the necessity of the truth requires.

In the devotional work called "The New Month of Mary," this prayer is offered to the Virgin: "O most powerful, because most faithful of God's creatures, I presume to approach thee with a lively sentiment of my own unworthiness to address God, whose indignation I have so much deserved, and with a strong conviction in the efficacy of thy intercession with Jesus, thy Divine Son, who has placed in thy hands all power and strength. May these sentiments always increase within me, that I may never presume, but PLACE ALL MY CONFIDENCE IN THEE."

The "Hebdomas Mariana," a devotional work "for every day in the week, in honour of the most glorious Virgin Mother of God, in order to obtain the grace of a happy death," in the midst of many other prayers to the same effect, contains the following:

"O Holy Mary, merciful Queen of Heaven, Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, Noble Couch of the whole Trinity; elected by the Father, preserved by the Son, loved by the Holy Ghost; overshadowed by the Father, inhabited by the Son, filled with all grace by the Holy Ghost; THROUGH THEE AND FOR THEE may I be blessed by God the Father, who created me; may I be blessed by God the Son, who redeemed me by his most precious blood; may I be blessed by God the Holy Ghost, who sanctified me in baptism; and may the most sacred Trinity, THROUGH THY INTERCESSION, receive my soul at the hour of death."

"O Holy Mary, Mother of our Redeemer, say at the hour of my death that thou art my mother, that I may be blessed, and that my soul may live FOR THEE. And if I shall be sent to that prison of burning until

I pay the last farthing, may thy mercy descend with me to refresh me in the flames, to solace me in my torments, that I may say, 'According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, may THY consolations rejoice my soul.' Thou, O Mother, then hasten to assist me: let not thy Son depart until He shall have blessed me, and remitted all my debts, BECAUSE THOU HAST REQUESTED HIM. Amen¹."

The following is found among the prayers published for those who are admitted into the "Pious Confederation of the Most Holy Mary, Mother of Providence, the Auxiliatrix of Christians, canonically established at Rome²."

"O Mother of God, Most Holy Mary, how many times have I by my sins deserved hell! Already, perhaps, would the sentence on my first sin have been executed, if THOU HADST not compassionately delayed the Divine justice; and then overcoming my hardness, hadst drawn me to have confidence in thee. And O! into how many crimes, perhaps, should I have fallen in the dangers which have happened to me, if thou, affectionate Mother, hadst not preserved me with the grace which thou hadst obtained for me."

In a work entitled "The Imitation of the Blessed Virgin," London, 1816, we read the following prayer to the Virgin. It is stained by the error with which our inquiries have already made us but too familiar, of contrasting the justice and stern dealing even of the Saviour Himself with the mercy, and loving-kindness, and fellow-feeling of Mary; making God an object of fear, Mary an object of love.

"Mother of my Redeemer, O Mary; in the last moments of my life, I implore thy assistance with more earnestness than ever. I find myself, as it were, placed between heaven and hell. Alas! what will become of me, if thou do not exert in my behalf thy powerful influence with Jesus? . . . I die with SUBMISSION, because Jesus has ORDAINED it; but

¹ Pp. 13, 14.—Rome, with permission, 1835.

² Pp. 3, 4.

notwithstanding the natural horror which I have of death, I die with PLEASURE, because I die under THY protection."

In the following passage⁷ how unworthy of the Christian faith is the thought, that we must pay reverence to one saint in order to gratify and propitiate another! Joseph must be especially honoured, in order to do what is acceptable to Mary, and conciliate Mary to ourselves. And how miserable is the expedient of attempting to give an appearance of Scriptural sanction by quoting King Pharaoh's direction to his starving subjects, to apply to Joseph, Jacob's son, for food in Egypt, when the unscriptural doctrine is urged of applying to Joseph, Mary's husband, for his intercession in heaven!

"It is giving to the Blessed Virgin a testimony of love particularly dear and precious to her, to make her holy spouse Joseph the first object of our devotion next to that which consecrates us to her service. The name of Joseph is invoked with singular devotion by all the true faithful. They frequently join it with the sacred names of Jesus and Mary. Whilst Jesus and Mary lived at Nazareth, if we had wished to obtain some favour from THEM, could we have employed a more powerful protector than St. Joseph? Will he now have less power and credit? GO THEREFORE TO JOSEPH, Gen. xli. 55, that he may intercede for you. Whatever favour you ask, God will grant it you at his request. . . . Go to Joseph in all your necessities; but especially to obtain the grace of a happy death. The general opinion that he died in the arms of Jesus and Mary has inspired the faithful with great confidence, that through his intercession they will have an end as happy and consoling as his. In effect, it has been remarked, that it is particularly at the hour of death that those who have during their life been careful to honour this great saint, reap the fruit of their devotion."

⁷ Chap. xiii. p. 344 ; xiv. p. 347.

In the "Little Testament of the Holy Virgin", we find, among other devotional addresses, "A Prayer to the Blessed Virgin." Can any words place on an entire level with each other the Eternal Son of God and the Virgin? We can only quote a few passages.

"O Mary, what would be our poverty and misery, if the Father of Mercies had not drawn you from his treasury to give you to earth! O my Life and Consolation, I trust and confide in your holy name. . . . At the name of Mary my hope shall be enlightened, my love inflamed. Oh that I could deeply engrave the dear name, on every heart, suggest it to every tongue, and make all celebrate it with me. Mary! sacred name under which no one should despair. Mary! it shall be life, my strength, my comfort. Every day shall I invoke IT AND THE DIVINE NAME OF JESUS. The Son will awake the recollection of the Mother, and the Mother that of the Son. Jesus and Mary! this is what my heart shall say at the last hour, if my tongue cannot: I shall hear them on my death-bed; they shall be wafted on my expiring breath, and I with them, to see THEM, know THEM, bless and love THEM for eternity. Amen."

When we read in the works of different ages and of distant countries such tenets as these, expressed in the solemn act of prayer:—

That the sentence on our sins might have been executed by our all-merciful Father, if Mary had not stayed the Divine justice;

That the Holy Spirit might have suffered us to fall into sins, had not Mary preserved us from falling;

That our prayers may be more speedily heard, when we invoke Mary's name, than when we call on the Lord Jesus;

That she is the way through which alone we can go

to Jesus, and the only channel through which Divine grace can reach our souls ;

That when our sins make us unworthy or afraid to address God, we are to approach Mary, and place our entire hope and confidence in her ;

That God, for the infinite love He has to Mary, will fling away at her suit the thunderbolt which He was on the point of hurling on wretched sinners ;

That when the eternal and omnipotent Judge of all the earth, who cannot but do right, WISHES TO CONDEMN THE GUILTY, MARY KNOWS HOW TO PREVENT THE EXECUTION OF THE SENTENCE ;

That the self-condemned sinner finding death to be at hand, and feeling himself to be placed between heaven and hell, meets death with submission, because God has ordained it, but despite of the natural horror of death, will die with pleasure because he dies under Mary's protection ;—

When we find these, and unnumbered other sentiments of the same force and bearing, we are constrained to say, can the religion which sanctions and prescribes these things be the Christian religion ? the religion which the one Mediator brought down with Him from the eternal and only God in heaven ? In these sentiments we hear no sound of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus ; in these representations we see no sign of that Lamb of God whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and who for the great love wherewith He loved us, is gone before to prepare a place for us to be with Himself in glory for ever.

Let, moreover, every refinement of distinction be applied between the honour due to God and the honour paid to the Virgin ; between the advocacy of Christ and the intercession of Mary ; between prayers direct and prayers oblique (as they have been called) ; between the hope and confidence which the Apostles, both by their example and teaching, bid the faithful Christian rest on God's mercy in Jesus Christ, and the hope and confidence which the canonized saints, and the doctors, and Popes of the Church of Rome profess

to place, and teach their people to place, in the power and mercy of Mary; let every explanation which ingenuity can devise be applied here, and still the practical result of the whole is a tendency to dispossess our Saviour of his functions of saving and redeeming lost mankind, and to leave to Him only the severe and unapproachable character of a judge; to wean our affections from God, and fix them on Mary; to make our personal application to ourselves of his merits and atonement (whereby alone we can stand in the place of sons, and realize the spirit of adoption) dependent on her intercession; to represent all the blessings and graces of the Holy Spirit as shut up in a sealed fountain till her benign and divine influence open it, and convey through herself such portions of the heavenly treasure as she wills to those who have, by devotion to her, secured her omnipotent patronage; to tempt believers to regard Mary as the way, and God in Christ as the truth and the life approachable only by that way;—in a word, to hold forth the Lord God of heaven, the gracious, merciful, loving Father, as an object of awe and terror, as the inflexible dispenser of Divine justice, (inflexible except when his love for Mary bends Him to be merciful to her votaries for her sake); and thus, though not confessedly and theoretically, perhaps, yet in very and practical truth, to make Mary the nearest and dearest object of a Christian's love.

But what saith the Scripture to these things?

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. X.

ON THE
WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.
EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE
AGAINST IT.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published :—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—[continued].
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

On the Worship of the Virgin Mary.—Evidence of Holy Scripture against it.

ON the principles by which persons, honestly searching for the truth, should be guided in their pursuit, we spoke in a former number, when we were inquiring into the evidence of Holy Scripture on the Invocation of Saints and Angels. In this place it will be enough to repeat generally the conclusions on the subject before us, to which a careful study of the Word of God cannot but lead.

If, then, there is one paramount and pervading principle more characteristic of Revelation than any other, it seems to be the preservation of a practical belief in the perfect unity of God, and the fencing of his worship against the admixture of any other, whatever be its character or form: it is the announcement that the Creator and Governor of the universe is the sole giver of every temporal and spiritual blessing, the one only Being to whom his creatures should pay any religious service whatever, the one only Being to whom mortals must apply, by prayer and invocation, for the supply of any of their wants. And to this principle the New Testament has added another equally essential, that there is one, and only one, Mediator between God and man, through whom every blessing must be

sought and obtained, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is ever making intercession for us.

Through the entire Bible, the exclusive worship of God alone is insisted upon, and guarded with the utmost jealousy, by assurances, by threats, and by promises, as the God who heareth prayer, alone to be called upon, alone to be invoked, alone to be adored. Recourse is had (if we may so speak) to every expedient, for the express purpose of protecting the sons and daughters of Adam from the fatal error of embracing in their worship any other being or name whatever, or of seeking from any other than the one Supreme God the supply of their wants; not reserving supreme and direct adoration and prayer to Him, and allowing some subordinate worship, some indirect and inferior kind of invocation to be offered to his creatures, even the most exalted among them, but banishing at once and for ever, the most distant approximation towards prayer and religious honour, and excluding with uncompromising universality, the veriest shadow of spiritual invocation to any other being than the Most High, GOD HIMSELF ALONE.

With regard to the Gospel doctrine of the mediation of Christ, we read, without any qualifying, or limiting, or excepting expression whatever, these truths: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus¹." "He is able also to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them²:" nay, the mouth of Him who spake as never man spake, thus solemnly and graciously announces the completeness of his own mediation, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father IN MY NAME, he will give it you³." Many pages might be added to the same effect. One Mediator has been revealed in his person and in his office, and He is expressly declared to be the one only Mediator between God and men; we therefore seek God's covenanted mercies through Him.

¹ 1 Tim. ii. 5.

² Heb. vii. 25.

³ John xvi. 23.

But (it will be asked) is the mediatorship of the Son of God exclusive of all other mediators in heaven? May there not be other mediators of intercession as well as that one Mediator of redemption? We answer, What might have been man's duty, had the Almighty been pleased to give another revelation for man's guidance, is not the question; in the revelation which He has given, we find mention made only of one Mediator. And if it had been his will, that we should approach the throne of mercy through any secondary or subsidiary mediators and intercessors, our confidence in his mercy would teach us to expect a revelation of that will as clear and unquestionable as the revelation which we know He has vouchsafed of the mediation and intercession of his blessed Son. His own revealed will directs us to pray for our fellow-creatures on earth, and to expect spiritual benefits from the prayers made on our behalf by the faithful on earth through that Mediator. To pray for them, therefore, and to seek their prayers, and to wait patiently for a gracious answer, are acts of faith and of duty. But that He will favourably answer the prayers which we might supplicate others as our intercessors in the unseen world to offer, or which we might offer to Himself through their merits, and by their mediation, is nowhere revealed. On the contrary, we find no single act, no single word, nothing which even by implication can be forced to sanction any prayer or religious invocation of any kind to any other than God Himself alone; or any reliance whatever on the mediation or intercession of any being in the unseen world, save only our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But is not that Mediator's holy mother an exception? Does not Scripture lead us to infer that the blessed Virgin has great influence and power? May not her intercession and mediation, and her kind offices be sought in prayer addressed to her? We answer, that we can find no trace or intimation of

any thing of the kind; on the contrary, the evidence of Holy Scripture is not merely negative on this point, but it is decided and conclusive against any such doctrine and practice.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The first intimation given to us that a woman was, in the providence of God, appointed to be the instrument or channel through which the Saviour of mankind should be brought into the world, was made immediately after the fall, and at the very first dawn of the day of our salvation. The authorized English version renders the passage thus: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: IT shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Instead of the word "IT," the Roman Vulgate reads "SHE;" the Greek Septuagint translates it "HE." But whichever of the renderings of the Hebrew word be correct, for our present purpose it matters little. Whether the word originally dictated by the Holy Spirit to Moses, be so translated as to refer to the seed of the woman generally, or to the male child the descendant of the woman, or to the "woman," be this as it may, no Christian can doubt, that it was ordained in the counsels of the Eternal Godhead, that the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind, should be born of a virgin, and that in the mystery of that incarnation the serpent's head should be bruised. Equally indisputable is it, that this prophetic announcement was in progress towards its final accomplishment when the Lord Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.

The only other reference made in the Old Testament to the mother of our Lord, seems to be the celebrated prophecy of Isaiah, about which, probably, no controversy can arise affecting the question before

⁴ Gen. iii. 15.

us: "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel".

To the many applications of other passages of the Old Testament to the Virgin Mary (however objectionable and unjustifiable they are), which are made both in the authorized services of the Church of Rome and in manuals of private devotion, we need not here refer, because they can never be cited in argument. Such, for example, are the addresses of the bride in the Song of Solomon, and that prophecy of the queen in the 45th Psalm, which has been of late applied to the Virgin as the Queen of Heaven⁶. The praise of wisdom, in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, is in the same manner applied to the Virgin. But through the Old Testament we find no passage which can by any, however circuitous or inferential, application be brought to countenance the doctrine, that Mary is a proper object of religious invocation.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the New Testament, mention by name is made of the Virgin Mary by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, and also, though not by name, yet as the mother of the Lord, by St. John in his Gospel, and by no other of the sacred writers. Neither does St. Paul, in any one of his various Epistles, though he mentions by name many of our Lord's disciples, nor St. James nor St. Peter, who must often have seen the Virgin Mary during our Lord's ministry, and after his return to his Father, nor St. Jude, mention her as living, or allude to her as dead; nor St. John, though, as his own Gospel teaches us, she had been committed to his care of especial trust, in either of his three Epistles, or in the Revelation, refer to the Virgin Mary.

The first occasion on which, in the New Testament,

⁵ Isaiah vii. 14.

⁶ Manual of the Living Rosary.

any reference is made to the Virgin Mary, is the salutation of the angel, recorded in the opening chapter of St. Luke's Gospel; the last occasion⁷ is, when she is mentioned by the same Evangelist as "Mary, the mother of Jesus," in conjunction with the brethren of our Lord, and with the Apostles, and "the women," all continuing in prayer and supplication, immediately after Christ's ascension. Between these two events the name of Mary occurs under a variety of circumstances, on every one of which we shall do well to reflect.

On the first occasion (The Salutation), the angel announces to Mary that she should become the mother of the Son of God. Doubtless, no daughter of Eve was ever so distinguished among women; and well does it become us to cherish her memory with affectionate reverence. The words then addressed to her on earth, with a change of expression, which many critics pronounce to be inadmissible, and to convey a meaning not warranted by the original, are daily addressed to her by the Roman Catholic Church, now that she is removed to the invisible world: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured [the Roman or Italian version renders it, "full of grace"]: the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." On the substitution of the phrase "full of grace," for "highly favoured," or, as our margin suggests, "graciously accepted," or "much graced," little need be said. It is to be regretted at all events that, since the Greek words are different here and in the first chapter of St. John, where the words "full of grace" are applied to the only Son of God, a similar distinction has not been preserved in the Roman translation.

The other expression, "Blessed art thou among women," is precisely the same with the ascription of blessedness made by an inspired tongue to another daughter of Eve, "Blessed *above* women⁸;" or (as

⁷ Acts iv. 13, 14.

⁸ Judges v. 24.

both the Septuagint and the Roman translations render the word), "*Blessed among women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, be.*" And in such ascription of blessedness, we see no ground of justification for the worship of the Virgin Mary.

The same observation applies, with equal strictness, to that affecting interview between Mary and her cousin, when Elizabeth, enlightened doubtless by an especial revelation, returned the salutation of Mary, by addressing her as the mother of her Lord, and hailing her visit as an instance of most condescending and welcome kindness: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me?" Members of the Church of England are taught to regard this event in Mary's life with feelings of delight and gratitude. It was on this occasion that she uttered the beautiful hymn, "*The Song of the blessed Virgin Mary,*" which our Church has selected for daily use at evening prayer.

These incidents bring before our minds the image of a pure virgin, humble, pious, obedient, holy; a chosen servant of God; an exalted pattern for her fellow-creatures; but still a fellow-creature, and a fellow-servant; a Virgin pronounced by an angel to be blessed. But further than this we cannot go, because further than this the Scripture does not lead us by the hand. We read of no power, no authority (neither the office and influence of intercession, nor the authority and right to command) being ever committed to her, and we dare not of our own minds venture to take for granted, and as the truth, a statement of so vast a magnitude, involving associations so awful. We reverence her memory as a holy and highly favoured daughter of Eve, the Virgin-mother of our Lord. We cannot supplicate any blessing at her hand; we dare not pray to her for her intercession.

The angel's announcement to Joseph, whether be-

fore or after the birth of Christ, the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt and the return thence, in the record of all which events by St. Matthew the name of Mary occurs, seem to require no especial attention with reference to the immediate subject of our inquiry, however important in themselves and interesting these events are. To Joseph the angel speaks of the Virgin as "Mary thy wife." In every other of these cases she is called, "the young Child's mother," or "his mother."

In relating the circumstances of Christ's birth, the evangelist employs no words which call for any particular examination. Joseph went up into the city of David to be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife; and there she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger. And the shepherds found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Between the birth of Christ, and the flight of the holy family into Egypt, St. Luke records an event to have happened by no means unimportant—the presentation of Christ in the Temple. "And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord¹." And Simeon "came by the Spirit into the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord," &c. "And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against (yea, a sword shall pass through thy own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." In this incident it is

¹ Luke ii. 22.

worthy of remark, that Joseph and Mary are both mentioned by name, that they are both called the parents of the child Jesus, that both are equally blessed by Simeon, and that the good old Israelite, illuminated by the Spirit of prophecy, when he addresses himself immediately to Mary, speaks only of her future trials and sorrows, and does not even remotely or faintly allude to any exaltation of her above the other daughters of Abraham, "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also".

The next occasion on which the name of the Virgin Mary is found in Scripture, is the memorable visit of her husband, herself, and her Son, to Jerusalem, when He was twelve years old. The manner in which this incident is related by the inspired evangelist, so far from intimating that Mary was destined to become an object of worship to the believers in her Son, affords evidence strongly bearing in the contrary direction. Here, again, Joseph and Mary are both called his parents. Joseph is once mentioned by name, and so is Mary. If the language had been so framed as on purpose to take away all distinction of preference and superiority, it could not more successfully have effected its object. And not only so; but of the three addresses recorded as having been made by our blessed Lord to his beloved mother (and only three are recorded in the New Testament), the first occurs during this visit to Jerusalem. That address was made in answer to the remonstrance made by Mary, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He makes no distinction here, "Knew ye not?" We may appeal to any dispassionate reasoner to pronounce whether such a reproof, couched in such words, countenances the idea that our

² Luke ii. 35. See De Sacy, vol. xxxii. p. 128.

blessed Lord intended his mother to receive such divine honour from his followers to the end of time as the Church of Rome now pays to her; and whether St. Luke, whose pen wrote this account, could have been cognisant of any such right vested in the Virgin? The Evangelist adds, "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

The next passage requiring our consideration, is that which records the first miracle of our Lord. "And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there, and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine (when the wine failed), the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." We need make no remark on the comments which different Roman Catholic writers have recommended for adoption here. Let the passage be interpreted in any way which fair and enlightened criticism, and the analogy of Scripture will sanction, and we may ask, Could any unprejudiced mind, after a careful weighing of the incident, the facts, and the words, in all their bearings, expect that the holy and beloved person, toward whom the meek, and tender, and affectionate Jesus employed this address, was destined by that omniscient Saviour to become an object of those religious acts with which (as we have seen) the Church of Rome daily approaches her? Indeed, Epiphanius considers our blessed Lord to have employed, on this occasion, the word "woman," for the express purpose of preserving believers in the Gospel from an excessive admiration of Mary: "Lest any one should think that the holy Virgin was a being of superior excellence".

We must now advert to an incident recorded with little variety of expression, and with no essential dif-

³ John ii. 1—4.

⁴ Epiph. Paris, 1622, pp. 1056—1064.

ference, by the first three Evangelists. St. Matthew's, which is the fullest account, is this: "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother⁵." Or, as St. Luke expresses it, "And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these who hear the word of God and do it⁶."

Humanly speaking, could a more favourable opportunity than this have presented itself to our blessed Lord, of referring to his mother in such a manner as to exalt her above her fellow-daughters of Eve; in such a manner, too, as that Christians in after-days, when the Saviour's bodily presence should have been taken away from them, and the extraordinary communications of the Spirit of truth should have been withdrawn, might have remembered that He had spoken such things, and have been countenanced by his words in doing her homage? But so far is this from the plain and natural tendency of his words, that had He intended to guard his disciples to the end of time against supposing that the love and reverence which they felt towards Himself should show itself in their exaltation of his mother above all created beings, language could scarcely have supplied words more fitted for that purpose. Nothing in the communication made to Him should seem to have called for

⁵ Matt. xii. 46. Luke viii. 21.

⁶ Tertullian, *De Carne Christi* vii. Chrysostom, vol. vii. p. 467, and others, comment in very strong and plain language against this (as it appeared to them) unjustifiable intrusion of Mary.

such a remark. A plain message announces to Him, as a matter of fact, one of the most common occurrences of daily life, and yet He fixes upon the circumstance as the groundwork, not only of declaring the close union between Himself and faithful believers in Him, but of cautioning all against any superstitious feelings towards those who were nearly allied to Him by the ties of human nature. With reverence we would say, it is as though He desired to record his foreknowledge of the errors into which his disciples were likely to be seduced, warning them beforehand to shun and resist the temptation.

The evidence borne by this passage against the offering by Christians of any religious worship to the Virgin, on the ground of her having been the mother of our Lord, is clear and direct. She was the mother of the Redeemer of the world, and blessed is she among women; but that very Redeemer Himself, with his own lips, assures us, that every faithful and obedient servant of his heavenly Father shall be honoured equally with her, and possess all the privileges which so near and dear a relationship with Himself might be supposed to convey. "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? Behold my mother and my brethren!" "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

We have equal reason to take notice in this place of that most remarkable passage, in which our blessed Lord is recorded, under different circumstances, to have expressed the same sentiment, but in words which carry with them even stronger indications of his desire to prevent any undue exaltation of his mother. "As he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." On the truth or wisdom

⁷ Luke xi. 27.

of that exclamation our Lord makes no remark; He refers not to his mother at all; not even to assure his audience that however blessed Mary might be in having brought forth the Saviour bodily, yet far more blessed was she (as St. Chrysostom^a and others remind us) because she had borne Him spiritually in her heart. To his mother He does not allude, except for the purpose of immediately fixing the minds of his hearers on the sure and greater blessedness of his faithful disciples. "But he said, Yea rather [or as some prefer to translate the words, 'Yea, verily, and'], blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Again, it must be asked, Could such an exclamation have been met by such an answer, had our Lord's will been to exalt his mother, as she is now exalted by the Church of Rome? Rather, we would reverently ask, Would He have given this turn to such an address, had He not desired to check any such feelings towards her?

That affecting and edifying incident recorded by St. John as having taken place while the Lord Jesus was hanging on the cross (an incident which speaks to every one that has an understanding to comprehend and a heart to feel), brings before us the last occasion on which the name of the Virgin Mary occurs in the Gospels.

No paraphrase could add force or clearness or beauty to the narrative of the evangelist; no exposition could bring out its parts more prominently, powerfully, or affectingly. The calmness and authority of our blessed Lord, his tenderness and affection, his filial love in the midst of his agony, it is impossible for the pen of man to describe with more heart-stirring and heart-soothing pathos. But not one syllable falls from the lips of Christ, or from the pen of the beloved disciple, which can be construed to imply that our blessed Lord intended Mary to be held by his followers in such honour as would be shown in the

^a See Chrys. vol. vii. p. 467.

offering of prayer and praise to her after her dissolution. He who could by a word have bidden the whole course of nature and of providence to minister to the health and safety, the support and comfort of his mother, leaves her to the care of one whom He loves, and whose sincerity and devotedness to Him He had, humanly speaking, long experienced. He bids John look to Mary as he would to his own mother; He bids Mary look to John, as to her own Son, for protection and solace. "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he said unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son: then said he to the disciple, Behold thy mother." And he added no more. If Christ willed that his beloved mother should end her days in peace, removed equally from the desolation of widowhood on the one hand, and from notoriety on the other, nothing could be more natural than such conduct in such a Being at such a time. But if his purpose had been to exalt her into an object of religious worship, that nations should kneel before her, and all people do her homage; and to teach all his followers to look to her as the channel through which the favour and blessings of heaven were to be conveyed to mankind, then the words and the conduct of our blessed Lord at this hour would be inexplicable; and so also would be the words of the evangelist closing the narrative, "And from that hour, that disciple took her unto his own home".

Subsequently to this, not one word falls from the pen of St. John which can be made to bear on the station, the person, or the circumstances of Mary. After his resurrection, our Saviour remained on earth forty days before He finally ascended bodily into heaven. Many of his interviews and conversations with

* John xix. 25.

the disciples during that interval are recorded. Every one of the four Evangelists has told us of some act or some saying of our Lord on one or more of those occasions. Mention is made by name of Mary Magdalene, of the other Mary, of the mother of James, of Salome, of Joanna, of Peter, of Cleophas, of the disciple whom Jesus loved (at whose home the mother of our Lord then was), of Thomas also, of Nathanael, and generally of the eleven. But by no one of the Evangelists is reference made at all in the gospels to Mary the mother of our Lord, as having been present at any one of those interviews; her name is not alluded to throughout.

On one solitary occasion, subsequently to Christ's Ascension, mention is made of Mary his mother; it is in company with many others, and without any distinction to separate her from the rest. "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren¹." Not one word is said as to Mary having been present to witness even the ascension of her blessed Son: we read of no command from our Lord, no wish expressed by Him, no distant intimation that they should show to her even marks of respect and honour; nor is any allusion made to her superiority or pre-eminence.

Sixty years at the least we may consider to be comprehended within the subsequent history of the New Testament before the Apocalypse was written; but neither in the narrative, nor in the epistles, nor yet in the prophetic part of the sacred writings, is there the most distant reference to Mary². Of him

¹ Acts i. 13.

² We need not allude to Rev. xii. 1, as a passage strangely perverted to apply to the Virgin in heaven, because Roman Catholics not at all agree together in such an application. See De Sacy, in

to whose filial care our dying Saviour committed his mother, we hear much. St. John we find putting forth the miraculous power of Christ at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple; we see him imprisoned and arraigned before the Jewish authorities; but not one word is mentioned as to what meanwhile became of Mary. St. John we find confirming the Church in Samaria; we see him an exile in the island of Patmos; but no mention throughout is made of Mary. Nay, though we have three of his epistles, and the second of them addressed to one whom he loved in the truth, we can trace in them no allusion to the mother of our Lord, alive or dead.

We have no reason to suppose that St. Paul had any personal knowledge of the Virgin. At all events it is a fact of which, neither do his own epistles, nor does the inspired history of his life and labours give the slightest intimation. St. Paul does indeed refer to the human nature of Christ derived from his human mother; and had St. Paul been taught by direct revelation, or by his fellow Apostles, older in the ministry than himself, to entertain towards her such sentiments as the Roman Church now entertains, he could not have found a more inviting occasion to give utterance to them. But instead of thus speaking of the Virgin Mary, he does not even mention her name or condition at all, referring only in the most general way to a daughter of Adam, of whom the Son of God was born: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons²."

This absence of evidence in Holy Scripture as to the birth, life, death, glories, and power of the Virgin Mary, seems to have been sensibly felt by many of her zealous votaries. To supply such want of countenance and sanction to the honours now paid to her in the Church of Rome, various expedients have

² Gal. iv. 4.

been adopted. The doctrine of progressive development has been relied on; and revelations of her influence and majesty have been alleged, as having been supernaturally made by herself to many of her most famous worshippers; especially are we referred to the revelations made by the Virgin to St. Bridget⁴. But another solution of this difficulty has been suggested, on which we shall make no comment, since few probably of the most ardent propagators of the doctrine of development will acknowledge that solution as their own. "The silence of Holy Scripture as to Mary's birth and circumstances (less being recorded of her than of John the Baptist) was designed, and for this very purpose, to be an encouragement to the votaries of Mary. God, wishing to countenance and second their pious zeal, omitted the record of those particulars which are now celebrated by her worshippers, that they might have ample room for the full exercise of their piety and for their religious and reasonable invention and propagation of novelties concerning her⁵."

Others, however, affirm that though not in Holy Scripture, yet in the works of the early Fathers of the Church, the mediation of the Virgin is recognized and taught, and prayers to her for blessings from heaven are sanctioned and prescribed. An honest and careful and thorough search into the genuine remains of those early writers, must convince every one, that for at least five hundred years the worship of the Virgin had no place or name in the Church of Christ. And this will be made the subject of some future numbers.

⁴ Diptycha Mariana, vol. vii. p. 20. ⁵ Dipt. Mar. vol. vii. p. 4.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XI.

ON THE
ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published :—

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- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

On the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, A.D. 47.

THE worship of the Virgin Mary seems to be entirely built upon a belief in the supernatural and miraculous removal of her person, her body as well as her soul, from earth into heaven. This is called in the Roman Church her Assumption; the alleged event being celebrated by an annual festival on the 15th of August. That event is not represented by any one to have taken place subsequently to the time when the Canon of Holy Scripture closes: we are therefore induced to enter now upon an investigation into the evidence on which the belief in so marvellous a transaction rests, having in a preceding number examined the testimony of the Sacred Volume as to the worship of the Virgin; and purposing in some subsequent numbers to carry on our enquiries on the same subject, into the writings of the Fathers of the Church through the first five centuries.

By the Church of England two festivals are observed in commemoration of two events relating to the Virgin Mary as the mother of our Lord, in the titles of both of which her name occurs: one the announcement of our Saviour's incarnation by the message of an angel, called "The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary;" the other "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple," called also "The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin." On the first of these solemnities we are taught to pray that as we have known

the incarnation of the Son of God by the message of an Angel, so by his Cross and passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection. On the second we humbly beseech the Divine Majesty, that, as his only Son was presented in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so we may be presented unto God with pure and clean hearts, by the same Jesus Christ our Lord. These days are appointed to commemorate events made known to us on the sure warrant of Holy Scripture; and these prayers are primitive and evangelical; they address God alone, and only through his Son. The second prayer was used in the Church from very early times, and is retained in the Roman Breviary¹. But instead of the first, which has still a place in the Missal, we now find in the Breviary a prayer neither primitive nor evangelical, which supplicates that those who use it, "believing Mary to be truly the mother of God, may be aided by her intercession with Him²."

In the Roman Church, however, feasts are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, in which we cannot join; among others, her Immaculate Conception, and her Assumption. By appointing a service³ and a collect commemorative of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary in her mother's womb, and praying that the observance of that solemnity may procure her votaries an increase of peace, the Church of Rome has not only acted without a shadow of countenance from Scripture, or primitive times⁴; but has herself given countenance and sanction, affixed her seal to a novel superstition, against which, at its commencement, so recently as the twelfth century, St. Bernard⁵ strongly remonstrated with the monks of Lyons. It is unhappily, moreover, a superstition which has often been defended by arguments, and explained by discussions,

¹ H. 536.² V. 496.³ H. 445.⁴ Epiphanius says distinctly, that Mary's birth was not out of the usual course of nature. Paris, 1622, p. 1003, &c.⁵ Paris, 1632. Ep. 174. p. 1538.

which have lost sight of all delicacy, and can in no way be profitable to the understanding or the heart.

But of all the institutions in honour of the Virgin, the Feast of the Assumption is regarded by the Roman Church as the head and crown. "The Assumption of the Virgin Mary (we are told) is the greatest of all the festivals which the Church celebrates in her honour. It is the consummation of all the other great mysteries by which her life was rendered most wonderful. It is the birth-day of her true greatness and glory, and the crown of all the virtues of her whole life, which we admire singly in her other festivals." Before such a solemn office of praise and worship as we find in the Church of Rome on the 15th of August were ever admitted among the institutions of the religion of the Gospel, its originators and compilers ought to have built upon sure ground: careful too should those persons be now who join in the service, and promote it by the countenance of their example; but more especially should the evidence on which it rests be sifted well by all who undertake to defend and uphold it, lest at last they prove to have loved Rome more than the truth as it is in Jesus. So solemn and marked a religious service in the temple, and at the altar of Him who is the Truth, ought to be founded on Holy Scripture; or at the very least, on undisputed historical evidence, the certain and acknowledged testimony of the Church from the very time of the actual occurrence of the fact on which it is based. Those persons incur a fearful responsibility, who aid in propagating for religious verities the inventions of men.

But what is the doctrine and the practice of the Church of Rome with regard to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary?

In the ritual of the Assumption, it is many

⁶ Alban Butler, vol. viii. p. 176.

times reiterated in a brief space, and with a slight variation of expression, that the Virgin was taken up into heaven; and this is asserted not on any general and indefinite notion of her glorified state, but with reference to one specific and single act of divine interposition, performed at a fixed time, effecting her Assumption "to-day." "To-day, Mary the Virgin ascended the heavens. Rejoice, because she is reigning with Christ for ever!" "Mary the Virgin is taken up into heaven, to the ethereal chamber, in which the King of kings sits on his starry throne." "The Holy Mother of God has been exalted above the choir of angels, to the heavenly realms." "Come, let us worship the King of kings, to whose ethereal heaven the Virgin-mother was taken up to-day." And that it is her bodily ascension, her corporeal assumption into heaven, and not merely the transit of her soul from mortal life to eternal bliss, which the Roman Church maintains and proclaims by this service, is put beyond doubt by the service itself. In the fourth and sixth reading or lesson, for example, we find these sentences;—"She returned not unto the earth, but is seated in the heavenly tabernacles. How could death devour? how could those below receive? how could corruption invade THAT BODY in which life was received? For it a direct, plain, and easy path to heaven was prepared." Indeed, doctors of the Roman Church do not scruple to affirm distinctly, that one object which their Church had in view, was to condemn the heresy of those who maintained that the reception of the Virgin into heaven was the reception of her soul only, and not also of her body¹.

Now on what authority does this doctrine rest? On what foundation-stone is this religious service built? It rests on no authentic history; it is supported by no

¹ Æst. 595. 603, 604.

² Lambecius, book viii. p. 306. See also the Lessons from John of Damascus, now appointed to be read on the day of the Assumption. Æst. 603.

primitive tradition. The most celebrated defenders of these Roman tenets and practices, instead of citing such evidence as would carry some faint semblance of probability, appeal to histories written more than a thousand years after the alleged event, to forged documents, and vague rumours. It is quite surprising to find many of them, instead of establishing by evidence what they say God once did, contenting themselves with asserting his omnipotence in proof that their tenets imply no impossibility; dwelling on the fitness and reasonableness of his working such a miracle in honour of so distinguished a vessel of mercy; and while they assume the fact as granted, substituting in place of argument, glowing and poetical descriptions of what must have been the joy in heaven, and what ought to be the corresponding feelings of mortals on earth. At every step of the inquiry into the merits of this case, that most sound principle, which is lamentably neglected, is brought again and again to our mind,—that as men really and in earnest looking onward to a life after this, we are bound to inquire, not what God could do, nor what man might pronounce it fitting for God to do, but what He has done, and what He has revealed. The moment a Christian writer betakes himself from evidence to possibilities, he deserts the first principles of Christian truth, and throws us back from the sure and certain hope of the Gospel of Christ, to the “beautiful fable” of Socrates, and his exclamation before his judges—“It were better to be there than here, IF these things are true.”

Now should any persons have resolved to adopt implicitly, without allowing any examination, and without admitting any appeal, the faith and present practice of the Church of Rome, they will take no interest in such an inquiry as we are now instituting; and they will find, in the sentiments of St. Bernard, countenance for thus surrendering their judgment and conscience. In the same letter in which, as we have seen, he reproves the monks of Lyons for promoting

the then rising superstition as to the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary in her mother's womb, (a superstition sanctioned by a solemn service of the Roman ritual at the present day,) he professes himself to be not "over-scrupulous" in receiving what the Church had taught him as to the Assumption of the Virgin,—“that the day was to be observed with the highest veneration, on which she was taken up from this wicked world.” On the other hand, well-informed members of that Church assure us, that a general desire has gained ground among them, to have this and other similar questions examined without prejudice, and the results of the inquiry to be calmly laid open before them and before the world. To such persons, the following pages may seem worthy of consideration.

We would, however, here observe (before we enter upon the evidence), that the Romanist writers on this subject are by no means agreed as to the time or place of the Virgin's death. While some have maintained that she breathed her last at Ephesus, others affirm that her departure from this world took place at Jerusalem; and as to the time of her death, some have assigned it to the year 48 (that is, about the time when St. Paul and St. Barnabas returned to Antioch'), while others refer it to later dates; none, however, fixing it at a period subsequently to the time when the Acts of the Apostles closes. Epiphanius, indeed, towards the end of the fourth century, reminding us that Scripture is wholly and plainly silent on the subject of Mary's death and burial, as well as of her having ever accompanied St. John in his travels or not, without alluding to any known tradition as to her Assumption, thus sums up his sentiments: “I dare to say nothing, but after consideration am silent.” And again he says distinctly, “Her end is not known.”

We now proceed to inquire into the evidence on which so solemn a religious service in honour of

⁹ Acts xiv. 26. Epiph. vol. i. p. 1043 and 1003.

the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, as the Church of Rome celebrates every year, is founded; a service, the spirit of which diffuses itself through the public services of the whole year, and is mingled with the daily devotional exercises of individual members of that Church.

In the first place, the Holy Scriptures are utterly and profoundly silent as to the time and the manner, and even the fact of the Virgin Mary's death. We then ask, if such an event, (witnessed, as this legend says, by the Apostles,) so marvellous in itself, and so important in its consequences, had actually taken place, is it within the verge of credibility, that no allusion to it should have been made in that inspired book, which records the actions and journeys and letters of those very Apostles, especially in the case of St. John, to whose filial care she had been committed by our blessed Saviour? Once after the ascension of our Lord, and that within eight days, we find mentioned the name of Mary promiscuously with others; and after that no allusion to her is made in life or in death; and yet no account places her death too late for mention to have been made of it in the Acts of the Apostles.

But, when we have in vain searched the holy volume, what light does primitive antiquity enable us to throw on this subject? The earliest testimony quoted by the supporters of the doctrine is a supposed entry in the Chronicon of Eusebius, written about A.D. 315, opposite the year of our Lord, 48. This is cited by Coccius¹ without any remark, and even Baronius rests the date of Mary's Assumption on this testimony. The words cited are these: "Mary the Virgin, the mother of Jesus, was taken up into heaven, as some write that it had been revealed unto them." Now, for one moment let us suppose that this came from the pen of Eusebius himself; and to what does it amount? A chronologist in the

¹ Vol. i. p. 403.

fourth century would then have been found to record that some persons (whom he does not name, not even stating when they lived), had written, not what they had heard as a matter of fact, but that a revelation had been made to them of an event having taken place nearly three centuries before the time of the chronologist.

But instead of this passage deserving the name of Eusebius as its author, it is palpably and confessedly an interpolation. Suspensions must have arisen at a remote date as to its genuineness; for many manuscripts, especially the seven in the Vatican, were known to contain nothing of the kind. Indeed, the Roman Catholic editor² of the *Chronicon* at Bourdeaux, so far back as A.D. 1604, confesses that he was restrained from expunging it, only because nothing certain as to the Assumption of the Virgin could be substituted in its place! Its spuriousness, however, is no longer a question of dispute or doubt; in 1818 it was excluded from the Milan impression edited by Angelo Maio and John Zohrab; and no trace of it is to be found in the Armenian version, published that same year, with anxious care to secure accuracy, by the monks of the Armenian convent near Venice.

The next authority to which we must refer is a letter³ said to have been written by Sophronius the presbyter about the commencement of the fifth century. It used to be ascribed to Jerome, but Erasmus referred it to Sophronius. To many this is an unwelcome document. Baronius shows great anxiety to detract from the value of the writer's evidence, whoever he was, sharply criticising him, because he asserts that the faithful in his time still expressed doubts as to the fact of the Virgin's Assumption. It is, however, to be remarked that Baronius, by

² P. 566.

³ The letter is entitled, "*Ad Paulam et Eustochium de Assumptione B. M. Virginis.*" It is found in Jerome's *Works*, edit. J. Martian, vol. v. p. 82.

assigning to this letter a date still later than the works of Sophronius, adds strength to the arguments for the comparatively recent origin of the tradition. For he says it was written by "an egregious forger of lies," who lived after the heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches had been condemned.

Be this as it may; that the letter is of very ancient origin cannot be doubted: and whoever penned it, whether we look to the sensible and pious sentiments contained in it, or to its undisputed antiquity, the following extract cannot fail to be interesting. Whatever other inferences may be drawn from it, it leaves no question, that so far from the tradition regarding the Virgin's Assumption being general in the Church when the writer lived, it was a subject of grave doubt and discussion among Christians, many of whom thought it an act of pious forbearance to abstain altogether from pronouncing any opinion on the subject. "Many of our people doubt whether Mary was taken up together with her body, or whether she went away leaving the body. But how, or at what time, or by what persons her holy body was taken hence and to what place removed, or whether it rose again, is not known; although some will maintain that she is already revived, and is clothed with a blessed immortality with Christ in heavenly places. And this very many affirm also of his servant the blessed John the Evangelist (to whom, being a virgin, the Virgin was entrusted by Christ); because in his sepulchre, as it is reported, nothing is found but manna, which also is seen to flow forth. Nevertheless which of these opinions should be thought the more true we doubt. Yet it is better to commit all to God, with whom nothing is impossible, than to wish to define rashly by our own authority any thing which we do not approve of. Because nothing is impossible with God, we do not deny that something of the kind was done

⁴ Baronius, Cologne, 1609, vol. i. p. 408. See also Fabricius Hamburg, 1804), vol. ix. p. 160.

with regard to the blessed Virgin Mary; although for caution's sake, preserving our faith, we ought with pious desire to think rather than to define inconsiderately what without danger may remain unknown."

This letter, at the very earliest, was not written until the beginning of the fifth century.

Subsequent writers were not wanting to supply what this letter declares to have been, at its own date, unknown, as to the fact, and the manner, and the time of Mary's Assumption, and the persons connected with the transaction. The first authority appealed to in defence of the tradition, is usually cited as a well-known work written by Euthymius, a contemporary of Juvenal, Archbishop of Jerusalem. The earliest author in whose reputed works the passage is found, seems to have been John of Damascus, a monk of Jerusalem, who lived somewhat before the middle of the eighth century. Much doubt exists as to the work from which the passage professes to be taken: the monk does not quote from it as "The history written by Euthymius" nor as "The history concerning Euthymius," but as "The Euthymiac History;" and Lambecius maintains, that it was not an ecclesiastical work written by Euthymius, who died in 472, but a biographical history concerning Euthymius himself, written, as he thinks probable, by Cyril the monk, who died 531. This opinion is combated by Cotelierius—the discussion only thickening the dense mist which involves the whole, from first to last. But whether Euthymius were the author, or the subject of the work, or neither the one nor the other, the work itself is lost; an epitome only survives; and in that abridgment, not a trace of the passage quoted by John of Damascus is found.

That author having represented himself as holding a conversation with the tomb of the Virgin, to which we must again advert, thus appeals to the passage in question: "Ye see, beloved fathers and brethren, what answer the all-gracious tomb makes to us; and, in proof that these

things are so, in the Euthymiac history, the third book, and fortieth chapter, it is thus written, word for word :—

“ It has been above said, that the holy Pulcheria built many churches to Christ, at Constantinople. Of these, however, there is one built in Blachernæ, in the beginning of the reign of Marcian of divine memory. Marcian and Pulcheria, therefore, when they had built a venerable temple to the greatly-to-be-celebrated, and most holy mother of God, and ever Virgin Mary, and had decked it with all ornaments, sought her most holy body, which had conceived God. And having sent for Juvenal, Archbishop of Jerusalem, and for the Bishops of Palestine, who were living in the royal city, on account of the synod then held at Chalcedon, they say to them, We hear that there is in Jerusalem, the first and famous church of Mary, mother of God, and ever Virgin, in the garden called Gethsemane, where her body, which bore the Life, was deposited in a coffin. We wish, therefore, her relics to be brought here for the protection of this royal city. But Juvenal answered, In the true and divinely inspired Scripture, indeed, nothing is recorded of the departure of the holy Mary, mother of God: but, from an ancient and most true tradition, we have received, that at the time of her glorious falling asleep, all the holy Apostles, who were going through the world for the salvation of the nations, in a moment of time borne aloft, came together to Jerusalem; and when they were near her, they had a vision of angels, and divine melody of the highest powers was heard; and then with divine and more heavenly glory, she, in an unspeakable manner, delivered her holy soul into the hands of God. But that which had conceived God, being borne with angelic and apostolic psalmody, with funeral rites was deposited in a coffin in Gethsemane. In this place, the chorus and singing of the angels continued for three whole days. But after three days, on the angelic music ceasing, since one of the Apostles had been

absent, and came after the third day, and wished to adore the body that had conceived God, the Apostles who were present opened the coffin; but the body, pure and every way to be praised, they could not at all find. And when they found only those things in which it had been laid out and placed there, and were filled with an ineffable fragraney proceeding from those things, they shut the coffin. Being astonished at the miraculous mystery, they could form no other thought but that He who had in his own person, deigned to be clothed with flesh, and to be made man of most holy Virgin, and to be born in the flesh, God the Word and Source of Glory, and who after birth had preserved her virginity immaculate, had seen it good, after she had departed from among the living, to honour her uncontaminated and unpolluted body, by a translation before the common and universal resurrection⁵."

This, then, is the account of the Virgin's Assumption NEAREST to the time; and can any thing be more vague, and, in point of evidence, more utterly worthless? It stands thus: a preacher, in the eighth century, refers to a work, (the character of which is unknown, and to that part of the work of which not a line is extant,) in which the writer, near the middle of the sixth century, is said to have referred to a conversation reported to have taken place at Constantinople a hundred years before that writer's time, in which conversation the then Bishop of Jerusalem was said to have informed the Emperor Marcian of an ancient tradition, concerning a miraculous event nearly four hundred years before that bishop's time, namely, that the body of Mary was taken out of the coffin, without the knowledge of those who had deposited it there. Whereas, the primitive and inspired account (recording most minutely the jour-

⁵ Jo. Damas; Paris, 1712, vol. ii. p. 875. 877. 881.

neys and proceedings of those very persons, before, and subsequently to, the alleged event, and the letters of Others), makes no mention at all of any transaction of the kind; whereas, also, of all the intermediate historians and writers of every character, not one gives the slightest intimation that any rumour of it had ever reached them.

Before we proceed to the next adduced testimony, it may be well to advert to some particulars relative to the sermon said to have been preached by this John of Damascus. The passage occurs in the second of three homilies, on "The sleep of the Virgin," a term generally used by the later Greeks as an equivalent for the Roman word *Assumptio*. The publication of these homilies in Greek and Latin is of late date. Lambecius⁶, A.D. 1655, says, that he was not aware of any one having so published them before his time. We wish, however, to raise no question now as to their genuineness. But the preacher's introduction of this passage into his homily is preceded by a section that deserves the careful weighing of all who would honestly ascertain the real sentiments of the early writers of the Christian Church. It affords a striking example of the manner in which Christian orators used to indulge in addresses and appeals, not only to the spirits of departed men, but even to things which never had life. Here the speaker, in his sermon, addresses the very tomb of Mary, as though it had ears to hear, and an understanding to comprehend; and then he represents the tomb as having a tongue to answer, and as calling forth from the preacher and his congregation a response of admiration and reverence. Such apostrophes as these cannot be too steadily borne in mind, or too carefully weighed, when any argument is drawn from similar salutations offered by ancient Christian orators to saint, or angel, or the Virgin.

⁶ Vol. viii. p. 281.

Among other salutations, John of Damascus, if the homily be his, thus addresses the tomb of the Virgin : "Thou, O tomb, of holy things most holy (for I will address thee as a LIVING BEING), where is the much-desired and much-beloved body of the Mother of God?" In this strange dramatic scene the answer of the tomb begins thus: "Why seek ye her in a tomb, who has been taken up on high to the heavenly tabernacles?" In reply to this, the preacher, first deliberating with his audience what reply he should make, thus speaks to the tomb; "Thy grace, indeed, is never-failing and eternal," &c.

By the maintainers of the invocation of saints and angels and the Virgin, many a passage, far more equivocal and indirect and less cogent than this, which a preacher here addresses to stone and earth, is adduced now to prove, that saints and martyrs and angels and the Virgin were invoked by primitive worshippers.

Of the lessons appointed by the Church of Rome for the Feast of the Assumption, to be read to believers assembled in God's house of prayer, three are selected and taken entirely from this very oration of John of Damascus.

Le Quien', the editor of the works of John of Damascus, offers some very interesting remarks bearing immediately on the agitated question, as to the first institution of the Feast of the Assumption, as well as on the tradition itself. He infers from the words of Modestus, patriarch of Jerusalem, that scarcely any preachers before him had addressed their congregations on the departure of the Virgin out of this life; he thinks that the Feast of the Assumption was, at the commencement of the seventh century, only recently instituted. While all later writers affirm, that the Virgin was buried in the valley of Jehoshaphat, Le Quien observes, that this could not have been known to Jerome, who passed a great part of his life

' Le Quien refers to earlier homilies on the *Dormitio Virginis*, p. 857.

in Bethlehem, and yet preserves a total silence on the subject; though, in his "Epitaph on Paula," he enumerates all the places in Palestine distinguished by any remarkable event. Neither, he adds, could it have been known to Epiphanius, who, though he lived long in Palestine, yet declares that nothing was known as to the death or burial of the Virgin.

Again, in his criticism upon the writings falsely attributed to Melito^{*} (their author being, on that account, generally referred to as the Pseudo-Melito), Le Quien observes, that since that author says many unworthy things of the Virgin (such, for example, as her great fear when death approached of being exposed to the wiles of Satan), the work was probably written before the council of Ephesus (*i. e.* A.D. 449); alleging this remarkable reason, that "after that time, there *BEGAN* to be entertained, as was right, not only in the east, but also in the west, a far better estimate of the Mother of God." Could any one urge a stronger proof that the worship of the Virgin Mary was neither apostolical nor primitive?

The same editor, Le Quien, insinuates the possibility of Juvenal (whose character he makes no scruple to stigmatize) having invented the whole story, in order, for his own sinister purpose, to deceive Marcian and Pulcheria; just, he says, as Juvenal forged certain writings for the purpose of securing to himself the primacy of Jerusalem,—a crime laid to his charge also by Leo the Great, in his letter to Maximus, bishop of Antioch[†].

But the maintainers of the story of the Virgin's Assumption refer us with much confidence to the works of Gregory of Tours, who died at the very close of the sixth century, A.D. 595. On his testimony we need add little to the comments of his own

^{*} Melito himself was Bishop of Sardis in the second century.

[†] P. 879. See also Leo's Works, vol. i. p. 1215, Epist. cxix. where we still find the charge referred to by Le Quien.

editor, one of the Benedictines. In his chapter "On the Apostles and the blessed Virgin," having referred to the ascension of our blessed Saviour, this Gregory thus proceeds: "At length the course of this life having been fulfilled by the blessed Mary, when she was now called from the world, all the Apostles were gathered together from every region to her house; and when they heard that she was to be taken from the world, they watched with her together. The Lord Jesus then came with his angels, and receiving her soul, delivered it to Michael the archangel, and withdrew. And at the dawn, the Apostles took up her body, with the couch, and placed it in a tomb, and guarded it, waiting for the arrival of the Lord. And, behold! again the Lord stood by them, and the holy corpse, taken up in a cloud, He ordered to be carried away into Paradise; where now, having resumed her soul, exulting with her elect, she is enjoying the good things of eternity, which will never end¹."

On this statement of Gregory of Tours, his Benedictine editor makes these remarks:—"What Gregory here relates concerning the death of the blessed Virgin, and its circumstances, beyond doubt he drew from that book of the Pseudo-Melito, concerning the removal of the blessed Virgin, which is classed by Pope Gelasius among the apocryphal books, and which is published in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*. Now that she died at Ephesus, is the opinion of learned men; but no one before Gregory of Tours is found to have asserted in express words the resurrection of the blessed Mary, and the Assumption of her body, and also her soul into heaven. Nevertheless, this opinion not long after prevailed in Gaul, so that it was even introduced into the Liturgy. Yet the Roman Sacramentary of St. Gregory contains nothing of the kind." This editor then refers to several previous authors, among others to Adamnanus on Holy Places, to

¹ Greg. Tur., Paris, 1099, p. 724.

whose sentiments on the subject before us, he adverts in these words: "Of the sepulchre of the blessed Virgin Mary, which was shown near Jerusalem, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, he thus speaks,—' In which sepulchre being entombed she rested. But as to the same sepulchre—in what way, or at what time, or by what persons her holy corpse was removed, or else in what place she is waiting for the resurrection, no one as it is reported, can know for certain.' "

On these passages from Gregory of Tours, and his annotator, we would briefly remark,

That this Gregory is the first known to have asserted the Assumption of the Virgin, body and soul, as it is now held in the Roman Church ;

That this account he drew from a forged work by one who is called the False Melito, the very work which just a century before (A.D. 494) the Roman Council, with Pope Gelasius at its head, denounced as apocryphal, and not to be read by the faithful, styling it "The book called the Transitus, that is, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin ;"

And that only after the time of this Gregory, the service of the Assumption crept into the Liturgy ; and that there was nothing like the account of Gregory of Tours in the Sacramentary of Gregory the Great. To this latter point we shall have occasion again to advert.

Another authority to which the writers on the Assumption of the Virgin appeal, is Nicephorus Callistus, who at the end of the thirteenth, or beginning of the fourteenth century dedicated his work to Andronicus Palæologus. This Nicephorus was patriarch of Constantinople about the reign of our Edward I. or Edward II., and therefore cannot be quoted in any sense of the word as an ancient author writing on the events of the primitive ages ; and yet the manner of citing him by Roman Catholic writers would lead us to

suppose that he was a person to whose evidence on early ecclesiastical affairs we ought now to defer. His account is as follows³ :—

“In the fifth year of Claudius, the Virgin, at the age of 59, was made acquainted with her approaching death. Christ himself then descended from heaven, with a countless multitude, to take up the soul of his mother, summoning his disciples, by thunder and storm, from all parts of the world. The Virgin then bade Peter first, and afterwards the rest of the Apostles, to come with burning torches. The Apostles surrounded her bed, and an outpouring of miracles flowed forth. The blind beheld the sun, the deaf heard, the lame walked, and every disease fled away. The Apostles and others sang as the body was borne from Sion to Gethsemane, angels preceding, surrounding, and following it. A wonderful thing then took place⁴. The Jews were indignant and enraged; and one, more desperately bold than the rest, rushed forward, intending to throw down the holy corpse to the ground. Vengeance was not tardy, for his hands were cut off from his arms. The procession stopped; and at the command of Peter, on the man shedding tears of penitence, his hands were joined on again, and were restored whole. At Gethsemane she was put into a tomb, but her Son translated her to the divine habitation.”

Nicephorus then refers to Juvenal, as the authority on which the tradition was received, that the Apostles opened the coffin to enable St. Thomas, the one stated to have been absent, to embrace the body; and he

³ Nicephorus, Paris, 1630, vol. i. p. 168, lib. ii. c. 21. Baronius also refers to lib. xv. c. 14.

⁴ This tradition seems to have been much referred to at the time just preceding our English Reformation. In a volume called “The Hours of the most Blessed Mary, according to the legitimate rite of the Church of Salisbury,” Paris, 1526, the frontispiece gives an exact representation of the story at the moment of the Jew’s hands being cut off. They are severed at the wrists and lying on the coffin, on which also his arms are resting. In the sky, the Virgin appears, between the Father and the Son, the dove being seen above her.

proceeds to describe the personal appearance and looks of the Virgin.

It is unnecessary to dwell on such evidence as this; and yet on this evidence, one of the most solemn religious festivals in the Church of Rome, the crown and consummation of others, is built. Palpably it is not within the verge of credibility, that had such an event as the Virgin Mary's Assumption, an event so miraculous in its nature, and so important in its consequences, taken place either under the extraordinary circumstances which now envelope the tradition, or under any combination of circumstances whatever, there would have been a total silence respecting it in Holy Scripture; that the writers of the first four centuries should never have shown themselves cognizant of such an event; that the first writer who alluded to any thing of the kind, should have lived in the middle of the fifth century, or later; and that even he should have declared, in a letter to his contemporaries, that the subject was one on which many doubts were entertained; and that he himself would not deny it, not because it rested on probable evidence, but because nothing is impossible with God. Can any confidence, moreover, be placed in the relation of a writer in the middle of the sixth century, as to a tradition of what an archbishop, attending the Council of Chalcedon, had told the emperor at Constantinople, concerning a tradition of what was said to have happened nearly four hundred years before? Whereas, in the Acts of that Council, not the faintest trace is found of any allusion to the supposed fact or the alleged tradition; though the transactions of that Council, in many of its most minute details, are recorded; and though its discussions brought the name and circumstances of the Virgin Mary continually, and with most lively interest, before the minds of all who attended it. And what dependence can be placed on the bare statement of a bishop of France, at the very end of the sixth century, who is the first to assert that the Virgin Mary was taken, body and soul,

into heaven, and whom his own Roman Catholic editor and annotator professedly declares to have drawn his account from the forged work of one, whose very name proclaims the worthlessness of his testimony, the Pseudo-Melito; the very work, too, which Pope Gelasius and the Roman Council pronounced, a century before, to be apocryphal, and which they forbade Christians to read.

But we must not leave the present subject of investigation, without adverting to an argument which is put forth in the present day with as much apparent confidence in its conclusiveness, as if it had undergone the most severe test, and been acknowledged to be valid; whereas, its utter worthlessness, in point of evidence, a very few words would demonstrate. Since, however, the nature of the evidence in question affects many points of interest beyond the single subject of our present inquiry, the time will not be lost which we may now give to a fuller elucidation of the point at issue.

The persons who put forth the argument to which we refer, assert that all our reasonings drawn from the total silence of the Fathers of the first five centuries, both Greek and Latin, as to the Assumption of the Virgin, with respect either to their own knowledge and belief, or to the practice of the Christian Church in their times, are worth nothing, so long as it can be shown that the festival of the Assumption was celebrated by the Church of Rome before the close of the fifth century; and this they maintain to be proved by our finding that festival in the Calendars and Sacramentaries, or service-books of those days. Especially, it is urged, is this fact proved by the Sacramentaries of Gregory the Great, who died A.D. 604, and of Pope Gelasius, who preceded him by a century, and also by what has been called "The Roman Calendar, of the fourth, or the early part of the fifth century, published by Martene."

How utterly valueless, nay worse, how deceitful and misleading, are any conclusions drawn from these sources, is known to every one at all conversant with the subject, and is shown by the very books themselves, which are cited as depositaries of such evidence.

In the first place, we would observe, that we by no means dispute the fact, either that Gregory and Gelasius themselves wrote, or, at least, superintended and sanctioned each a Sacramentary, containing, as our Calendars and Liturgy contain, the Festival days, with the Collects, Gospels, &c. But that additions were made to these Sacramentaries or Calendars from time to time, is not only capable of proof by ourselves, but has been long acknowledged and asserted, and maintained and reasoned upon, by the best Roman ritualists. Take, for example, Muratori himself, in his preface to the Sacramentary of Gelasius. Having urged what he regards as conclusive arguments, that the work is correctly attributed to that pope, he proceeds to give an answer to objections which had been made to his view; an answer which recognizes the only correct mode of estimating the value of such evidence as these Sacramentaries and old Calendars contain on any subject to which it can be applied. "But, it is said, additions were made to the Sacramentary itself, after the time of Gelasius! We by no means, deny it. But this is no reason why St. Gelasius should not be called its author. Why even the very Liturgy of Gregory is not denied to be his, merely because other prayers, and festivals, and rites were introduced into it after St. Gregory's time." Muratori then refers to certain feasts found in his time in the manuscripts of the Sacramentary of Gelasius, which were festivals of the Gallican and not the Roman Church; the appearance therefore of which proves that the document did not continue as Gelasius left it. He adds, "In it is also found the Mass for the Exaltation of the Holy Cross,

a feast which, as all learned men know (*ut omnes eruditi norunt*), was instituted after the time of Gelasius." This, he says, shows that the manuscript in question was written after the time of Gelasius; and since in the time of Charlemagne the Gallican Liturgy was suppressed and the Roman substituted, he concludes that the manuscript was written before A.D. 800⁵. We need scarcely to remark that the appearance of the Assumption as a festival of the Roman Church in a Calendar at the close of the eighth century, cannot affect our question as to the worship of the Virgin through the first four centuries.

The Calendar published by Martene, as a Roman Calendar of the end of the fourth or the commencement of the fifth century, needs not detain us long. Martene found two manuscripts which he judged to be of that age; one of which was, as they say (*ut perhibent*), given to a convent by Charlemagne. But of the dependence to be placed on his judgment and experience in such matters we know nothing; and the value of the testimony depends wholly on the age, not only of the manuscript itself generally, but also of the very entry about which any question is entertained. We have seen that the insertion of the Virgin's Assumption into the *Chronicon* of Eusebius is now no longer denied to be spurious; and in those days when Calendars were not, as Almanacs are now, published annually, newly instituted feasts would naturally be inserted in old Calendars. But, after all, it is merely Martene's conjecture⁶ that these manuscripts contained the Roman Calendar at all, whatever were their age; for neither of them was prefaced by any heading or title to that effect. The high antiquity fixed by Martene on those manuscripts cannot be maintained without setting at nought the deliberately pronounced judgment of critics and divines, of whose authority no Roman Catholic will speak lightly. For they

⁵ Muratori, *De Rebus Liturgicis*, p. 53.

⁶ *Thesaur. Anec.* vol. v. p. 76.

have both the feast of Hypapante on the 2nd of February, whereas Baronius⁷ affirms that that feast was not observed till the fifteenth year of the Emperor Justinian, which was A.D. 542, nearly a century and a half later than the date assigned to these insulated manuscripts by Martene.

But the testimony to which Christians are now not only confidently but triumphantly referred for demonstration of the fact, that the Feast of the Assumption is older than the time of Gregory the Great, is the Sacramentary of that pontiff, in which it is found August 15, the day now observed as that festival in the Church of Rome. This question of the antiquity of the festivals does not involve merely a dry matter of fact, but has an immediate bearing on a most important and interesting subject, no less than the genuine or spurious character of many works attributed to the Fathers of the early Church. We would illustrate our meaning by a plain example. If it is clearly established that the festival of Hypapante, called also Simeon and Anna, and in more recent times the Purification, was not instituted till the fifteenth year of Justinian, A.D. 542; a Homily ascribed to Methodius, who lived in the third century, professing to have been preached on that festival, is proved by the same argument to be supposititious.

But, in our inquiry into the degree of dependence which may be placed on the Sacramentary of Gregory the Great, as an historical document to be employed in verifying dates, we must observe, in the first place, that many centuries ago, at the close of the eighth, or the beginning of the ninth century, so great uncertainty was felt as to what was the genuine work of Gregory, and what were additions and interpolations made to it subsequently to his time, that three divines⁸ were appointed to distinguish the genuine from the

⁷ Baronius; Paris, 1607, p. 57. Feb. 2.

⁸ Du Pin, "Auteurs Eccles." Mons, 1681, vol. v. p. 143.

spurious part. But they could not agree as to what had been added; and naturally, if the manuscripts to which they had access did not agree. These three divines were Rodrade, a monk of Tours; Alcuin, otherwise called Albin, who was Charlemagne's master, and Grimoldas the abbot. The labours of the latter were published by Pamelius⁹ nearly three centuries ago. Grimoldas maintained, that neither the festival of the Virgin's Nativity nor the Assumption was in Gregory's Sacramentary, into which, as we have already seen (according to Muratori's assertion), festivals, as well as prayers and rites, were inserted since Gregory's time. Indeed Muratori, though pleading for the antiquity of the festival, distinctly says, that Gregory had not inserted it himself in his Sacramentary.

Since that time, Menard published another copy of Gregory's Sacramentary, which contained the festivals of St. Prix¹, or Præjectus, who died about A.D. 672, that is, sixty-eight years after Gregory's death, and of Leo II., who died twelve years still later than Prix. But it is a remarkable fact that, were all other proofs wanting, the very edition¹ to which we are now referred, bears in its forehead a palpably self-evident demonstration, that whoever rests on Gregory's Sacramentary as chronological evidence, builds on nothing that can stand the test of truth. For on IV. Idus Mart., the day now observed by the Church of Rome as the anniversary of Gregory's death, the very Sacramentary to which appeal is now made, contains the service for the annual festival of Gregory himself, including collects praying for the benefit of his intercession. That is, the self-same evidence which is now cited to prove the Feast of the Assumption to have been celebrated before Gregory's death, proves, with equal satisfaction, that the solemnities on the anniversaries of that pope's death were celebrated, and

⁹ Pamelius; Cologne, 1571, vol. ii. p. 336. 388.

¹ Acta Sanct. vol. ii. p. 629.

that he was a canonized saint², and that the efficacy of his intercession in heaven was prayed for while he himself was still alive bodily on earth, discharging his office as the sovereign pontiff of Rome.

And thus the Assumption of the Virgin, tried by Holy Scripture, by the testimony of the early Church, and on the very evidence proffered in its support by its advocates, proves to be in truth "a fond thing, vainly invented," built on no ground which reason or faith can rest their foot upon.

² Greg. Paris, 1705, p. 30.

THE END.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XII.

ON THE
WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.
EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH
AGAINST IT.



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THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published :—

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- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
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- XIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XIV. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XV. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

On the Worship of the Virgin.—Evidence of the Early Church against it.

BEFORE we proceed to examine the evidence concerning the worship of the Virgin Mary, as it is supplied by the works of the Fathers of the primitive Church, we would repeat on this subject the sentiments which we professed, before we entered on the corresponding inquiry with reference to the invocation of saints and angels. We are led, then, to examine the evidence of Christian antiquity not by any misgiving, lest the testimony of Scripture on the point might appear defective or doubtful; far less by any idea of God's word needing the support of man's suffrage. On the contrary, the voice of God in his revealed word gives to us no faint or uncertain sound, as it warns us against offering prayers, or any religious worship, or any invocation to the Virgin Mary; and it is a fixed principle with all right-minded Christians, that wherever God's written word is clear and certain, no human evidence can be weighed against it. But in testing the soundness of our interpretation of that word, the works of the earliest writers of the Church are most truly valuable; and in our investigation

of the prevalence of any doctrine and practice of primitive times, those ancient records are indispensable.

Now let us here, too, for argument's sake, suppose, that instead of the oracles of God having spoken, as we have seen, clearly and certainly on this point, the question had been left in Scripture an open question; then what evidence would be deducible from the writings of the primitive Church as to the worship of the Virgin Mary? What testimony do the first ages, after the canon of Scripture is closed, bear upon this point? When we, of the Church of England, religiously abstain from presenting any address in the nature of prayer, or supplication, entreaty, request, or invocation of whatever kind, and from acts of religious worship and praise to the Virgin, ~~are we~~, or are we not, treading in the steps of the first Christians, and adhering to the very pattern which they set? And do the members of the Church of Rome by such acts of worship directed to the Virgin Mary, as we find in their authorized and appointed liturgies, and in their works of private devotions, or do they not, depart as far and as decidedly from the model of primitive Christianity, as they do from the plain sense of Holy Scripture?

The result of a careful examination of the body of Christian writers is an entire assurance, that, at the least, through the first five centuries, the worship of the Virgin now insisted upon by the decrees of the Council of Trent, prescribed by the Roman ritual, and actually practised in the Church of Rome, had neither name, nor place, nor existence among Christians. No single remark of any of these writers leads us to infer that the worship of the Virgin was known in their times. On the contrary, their silence, and that often on occasions when their silence is irreconcilable with their possessing knowledge on the subject, proves them to have been unconscious of any such doctrine and practice as now prevail in the

Church of Rome. But besides this, which may be called negative evidence, the principles which they habitually maintain, and the sentiments with which their works abound, are utterly inconsistent with such belief and practice. This might be exemplified in other cases, but more especially is it forced on our notice when we find many of the most venerable Fathers of the Church, in their comments on the passages of Scripture which record the actions of the Virgin, directly¹ charging her with errors and failings, altogether incompatible with those views of her perfections, which the doctrines of the Church of Rome put before us. It is also worthy of remark, that the spurious writings ascribed to the Fathers², of a date not more remote at furthest than the seventh century, abound with ascriptions of power, and mercy, and glory to the Virgin, with declarations of implicit belief in her influence and intercession, and with prayers to her for temporal and spiritual blessings; while for any traces of such, the genuine works of the same Fathers will be searched in vain.

Among those, indeed, who adhere to the Tridentine confession of faith, there are some on whom such an investigation, as we are now instituting, would have no influence. The sentiments of Huet, the Roman Catholic commentator and bishop, wherever they are adopted, would set aside such inquiries altogether. His words in his dissertations on Origen, are of far wider application than the immediate occasion on which he used them: "That the blessed Mary never conceived any sin in herself is, in the present day, an established principle in the Church, and confirmed by the Council of Trent; in which it

¹ This will hereafter be shown to be the case with Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Cyril of Alexandria.

² This we find exemplified in the spurious works of Ignatius, Methodius, Athanasius, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Gregory of Nazianzum, Ephraim Syrus, Chrysostom, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Pope Leo, &c.

is our duty to acquiesce, rather than in the dicta of the ancients, should any of them appear to think otherwise, among whom must be numbered Origen³."

In entering upon our present inquiry, we take for granted that the reader is open to conviction, desirous of arriving at the truth, and as one efficient means of attaining it, ready to sift honestly and patiently the evidence of the primitive Church.

Ancient Creeds.

At this stage of our inquiry it will not be out of place to observe, that in the most ancient creeds there is no intimation whatever of any idea being entertained when they were framed, as to the posthumous exaltation of the Virgin, her assumption into heaven, the invocation of her name, reliance on her merits and patronage, or belief in her intercession. Many creeds are recorded in the early writers, in which the incarnation of the Son of God is an article invariably inserted, and in some cases largely dwelt upon; but the phrases employed refer to no dignity of his mother's nature, no mediatorial office assigned to her, no power granted to her of benefiting mankind, nor any adoration of her name. The three creeds now usually employed in the Church, afford conjointly a fair specimen of the language and sentiments of the rest; some of which mention the Virgin Mary by name, while others do not allude to her further than does St. Paul, "God sent forth his Son made of a woman⁴." "He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary⁵." "He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary⁶." "God of the substance of his Father, begotten before the worlds, and Man of the substance of his mother, born in the world⁷." Thus some of the

³ Origen, vol. iv. part ii. p. 166, Paris, 1733.

⁴ Gal. iv. 4. ⁵ Apostles' Creed.

⁶ Nicene.

⁷ Achanasian.

ancient creeds say, "who was incarnate and made man," without any reference to his mother; others, "born of a Virgin;" others, "born of Mary;" others, "born of the Virgin Mary;" not one referring to her, except as the mother of the Incarnate Word, not one alluding at all to her dignity, her authority, or her present state. In this respect they all essentially differ from the "creed of Pope Pius IV.," to the belief in the truth of which ministers of the Church of Rome are bound, as containing articles of faith, without which there is no salvation¹. That Creed not only announces that the saints reigning with Christ are to be worshipped, but while it asserts generally that due honour and worship must be paid to other saints, it joins, in a marked manner, the images of "Christ and the Virgin Mary" together, in contradistinction to the others. Of such things as these there is no more a trace to be found in any of the ancient creeds, than in the Holy Scripture itself.

Evidence of Primitive Christian Writers.

For a brief notice of the times, the circumstances, and the works of the Fathers, which are cited in the course of our present inquiry, down to the middle of the fourth century, the reader is referred to a former Tract (No. 6 and 7 of this Series), in which the evidence of primitive writers is examined as to the worship of saints and angels.. Of those authors who flourished after Athanasius, similar short notices will be prefixed to their testimonies upon the subject under consideration.

The Apostolic Fathers².

Of the remains of those five writers who are usually

¹ Irenæus, lib. i. c. 2.

² Tertullian, De Præscr. c. 13.

³ Catechism, ad Parachos, Lugduni, 1686, p. 521.

⁴ Antwerp, 1698.

called Apostolic Fathers, we have no means of affixing the date to each with any confidence in its accuracy. No reasonable doubt, however, is entertained that they were all in existence long before the Council of Nice, A.D. 325.

1. In the Epistle of St. Barnabas, which gives directions on the subject of prayer, no mention is made of the Virgin Mary.

2. In the Shepherd of Hermas, while the same silence is observed with regard to the Virgin, the Son of God is declared to be the GATE, and THE ONLY WAY TO GOD³, in language which contrasts itself very strongly with the prayers of modern Rome, which address Mary as the "Gate of heaven," and implores her to be "our way to God."

3. Clement, bishop of Rome. The writings of this primitive father become perhaps the more interesting in our present inquiry, as containing the sentiments of one of the earliest bishops of that Church, whose present belief and practice we are now testing by the evidence of primitive times. And so far from a single word occurring which might lead us to suppose that this Clement was cognizant of any invocation of the Virgin, or any reliance on her intercession prevailing among Christians, his evidence against it is more than negative. For though he speaks of angels and of holy men of old who pleased God, such as Enoch, Abraham, David, Elijah, and Job; though he bids us think of St. Peter and St. Paul, looking to them with reverence and gratitude, in order that we may imitate their good examples; he never alludes to the Virgin Mary; and even when he speaks of our blessed Lord having descended from Abraham according to the flesh, he makes no mention of that daughter of Abraham of whom the Christ was born.

4. In St. Ignatius we find no trace of any invocation of the Virgin, or of any dependence on her merits.

³ Sim. ix. sect. 12.

This early martyr speaks of the twofold nature of Christ again and again. Thus, he says, "there is one physician both of a corporeal and of a spiritual nature; begotten and not begotten; God in the flesh; true life in death; both from Mary and from God." "Our physician is the only true God, ungenerated and unapproachable, the Lord of all things, the Father and Generator of the only-begotten Son. We have also for our physician, our Lord God Jesus Christ, who was before the world, the only-begotten Son and the Word, but also afterwards Man of the Virgin Mary, for the Word was made flesh⁴." "Son of God, and Son of Man according to the flesh of the seed of David."

Unhappily we are thus early in our inquiry compelled to advert to the unjustifiable expedient of quoting for evidence spurious passages, and urging them with all confidence, in support of a favourite doctrine. Alphonsus Liguori, canonized by the present Pope in 1839, thus quotes Ignatius, in defence of the present Roman doctrine concerning the Virgin's attributes and saving power:

"Before Bonaventura, St. Ignatius had pronounced that a sinner can be saved **ONLY** by having recourse to the blessed Virgin, whose **INFINITE** mercy obtains salvation for those who would be condemned by infinite justice. Some pretend that the text is not taken from Ignatius, but we know that St. Chrysostom attributes it to him⁵."

After what we have before said, it is scarcely necessary to add, that in no one of the works of St. Ignatius can any allusion to such a position be discovered; and though Liguori says, "We know that St. Chrysostom attributes it to Ignatius," yet not only has the work of that father on the life and character of Ignatius, but also every other part of his works, been carefully and repeatedly searched for any allusion

⁴ Epist. to Ephes. p. 13.

⁵ P. 48.

⁶ Dublin, 1843, p. 190.

to such a statement, but not the slightest trace can be discovered. In the course of our present investigation, we shall too often be reminded of the recklessness and eager anxiety with which the system of quoting spurious works as genuine, and of referring to works which cannot be discovered, has been pursued.

5. In St. Polycarp, usually ranked as the last of the Apostolic Fathers, we find no allusion to the merits or intercession of Mary.

In bringing to a close this brief reference to the Apostolic Fathers, the same question offers itself to us under different circumstances, but with great cogency under all. If the doctrine and practice of worshipping the Virgin as Roman Catholics now do, if the doctrine of her mediatorial office, if the practice of praying to her even for her intercession, if reliance on her power, and influence, and merits had been known and acted upon by the Apostles themselves, and those who were successors or disciples of the Apostles, would not some plain unequivocal indications of it appear in such writings as these, in which much is said of prayer, and repeated reference is made to the incarnation of the Son of God? Does it accord with common sense and ordinary experience that there should be in these writings a profound and total silence on the subject of invoking the Virgin Mary for her good offices, if invocation addressed to the Virgin had been known, approved, and practised in the primitive Church?

Justin Martyr, A.D. 150⁷.

Justin Martyr refers to the Virgin Mary in her character as the mother of our Lord⁸; but we discover no trace of any notion of her power or influence, of any invocation addressed to her, of any thought of her merits to be pleaded in our behalf, or of any regard to her as a mediator and intercessor; we find no epithet

⁷ Ed. Paris, 1742.

⁸ Trypho, sect. 100, p. 195.

expressive of honour, dignity, or exaltation beyond what we, as members of the Church of England, habitually use ourselves. "He therefore calls himself the Son of Man, either because of his birth of a virgin, who was of the race of David and Jacob, and Isaac and Abraham; or because Abraham himself was the father of those persons enumerated, from whom Mary drew her origin." And a little below he adds—"For Eve being a virgin, and uncorrupt, having received the word from the serpent, brought forth transgression and death; but Mary, the Virgin, having received faith and joy (on the angel Gabriel announcing to her the glad tidings that the Spirit of the Lord should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her), answered, 'Be it unto me according to thy word.' And of her was He born of whom we have shown that so many Scriptures have been spoken; He by whom God destroys the serpent, and angels and men resembling [the serpent]; but works a rescue from death for such as repent of evil and believe in Him." In another place he says, "According to the command of God, Joseph, taking Him together with Mary, went into Egypt."

In the volume containing Justin's works are "Questions and Answers to the Orthodox," which, as it is agreed on all sides, are not his, but the productions of a later hand. The arguments appear strong, which assign them to a Syrian Christian as their author, who lived in the fifth century or even later. Among the doubts and difficulties and objections which are made and answered in these Questions, this inquiry is proposed, "How could Christ be free from blame, who so often set at nought his parents?" The answer is, "He did not set his mother at nought; He honoured her in deed, and would not hurt her by his words." But to this the respondent adds, that Christ chiefly honoured Mary in that view of her maternal character, under which all who heard the

⁹ Ques. 136, p. 500.

word of God and kept it were his brothers, and sisters, and mother; and that she who surpassed all women in virtue was therefore chosen to be the mother of the Saviour.

Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus.

In the same volume with the works of Justin Martyr, the Benedictines have published the remains of these three learned Christians of the second century; and in defence of some doctrines of the Roman Church, those editors appeal to the works of each of these authors separately.

Tatian, by birth an Assyrian, and pupil of Justin Martyr, led a life marked beyond others by severe austerity. One work of his, "An Address to the Greeks," remains to the present time, in which he exposes the follies and immoral tendencies of their mythology. In the course of his argument, mentioning by name many of the females whom the Greek poets had celebrated, he compares them with the modest, chaste, and retired habits of Christian virgins¹, who, he says, as they are occupied with their distaff, speak of heavenly things, and of what they learn from God's oracles, far more admirably than Sappho could sing her immoral strains. The question forces itself on our mind, as we read such portions of his address as these, Could a Christian writer have here abstained from speaking of the Virgin Mary, if she had been the same object of his invocation, the same source of his hope, the same theme of his praise as she now is with her worshippers in the Roman communion? Could he have passed her by unnamed, without alluding to her honour on earth, or her exaltation to heaven, and her influence there?

In the two other authors, we find no reference made to the Virgin Mary². Theophilus, indeed, speaks of

¹ C. 33, p. 270.

² Lib. ii. c. 22.

"God the Word begotten from everlasting of the Father;" and it is remarkable that in his translation of the third chapter of Genesis, he applies the promise of bruising the serpent's head, not to the woman, as the Roman version applies it, but to her seed.

St. Irenæus, A.D. 180.

Next to Justin, who sealed his faith by his blood, about A.D. 165, we must examine the evidence of St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons. Of his works a very small proportion is known to survive in the original Greek; and we must avail ourselves of the nervous, but inelegant Latin translation, corrupt and imperfect in many parts as it unfortunately is. One passage³ in Irenæus, closely resembling a passage we have just quoted from Justin Martyr, is cited by Bellarmin and others, as justifying the invocation of the Virgin Mary; but it is entirely beside the mark. The passage is rendered word for word: "For as that one, (Eve,) by the discourse of an angel, was seduced to fly from God, running counter to his word, so also this one, (Mary,) by the discourse of an angel, received the glad tidings, that she should bear God. And as that one was seduced to fly from God, in like manner also this one was persuaded to obey God; so that of the virgin Eve the Virgin Mary might become the advocate; and as the human race was BOUND to death by a virgin, it MIGHT BE LOOSED by a virgin, a virgin's disobedience⁴ being disposed of in an equal scale by a virgin's obedience." Cardinal Bellarmin stops short at the word advocate, and exclaims, "What can be clearer?"

Now in whatever sense Irenæus may be supposed to have employed the Greek word here rendered in the Latin version *advocata*, it is difficult to see how the circumstance of Mary becoming the advocate of

³ Lib. v. c. 19, p. 316.

⁴ The closing sentence is imperfect.

Eve, who so many generations before Mary's birth had been removed to the other world, can bear upon the question, whether it is lawful for a Christian now dwelling on earth to invoke the Virgin Mary.

But in our own days another most startling sense is applied to the closing words of Irenæus in the same paragraph. The comment being founded on unquestionably an untenable⁴ reading, to prove the unsoundness of the reading would have been enough, had not the interpretation now given to the passage supplied a palpable instance of the deplorable extent to which the doctrine of the Virgin's merits as affecting man's salvation is carried by our contemporaries. We shall scarcely find even in Bonaventura or the Bernardines a more entire sacrifice of Christian truth to the theory of the Virgin's exaltation and prerogatives. The writer to whom we refer having maintained that the words "Death by Eve, Life by Mary," are frequently found in the Fathers, and "imply that the Virgin had more than a mechanical share in the world's redemption," afterwards proceeds to say, "Now observe the very strong language of St. Irenæus: *Quemadmodum astrictum est morti genus humanum per Virginem, SALVATUR per Virginem, æquâ lance disposita virginis inobedientia per virginalem obedientiam.* That is in common parlance, 'THE MERITS OF MARY WERE SO GREAT AS TO COUNTERBALANCE THE SIN OF EVE!'"

We need not dwell on so monstrous and shocking a perversion of the meaning of Irenæus as this would have been, even had the reading been *salvatur*, because beyond all doubt the proper reading is *solvatur*. Whether the passage be tried by the external evidence of printed editions from a date further back than three hundred years; or of the best manuscripts, or of ancient quotations; or by the internal evidence of what the sense requires, and of the sentiments and language of Irenæus in other parts of his work, the

⁴ Dublin Review, June, 1844.

old reading *solvatur* must be restored. The idea present to the mind of Irenæus, and repeatedly embodied by him in words is, that the KNOT by which Eve's unfaithfulness⁶ BOUND the human race was LOOSED by the Virgin's faithfulness in becoming the mother of the Saviour. The old and true reading here preserves the correlativeness of the terms of the passage; the new reading, first introduced by Grabe in 1702, at once destroys it.

How far Irenæus was from thus exalting Mary into a Saviour, whose merits counterbalanced Eve's sin in yielding to Satan, and involving mankind in her fall, is evident to any one who reads his remains. In referring to the mother of our Lord, he speaks of "Mary" or "the Virgin," or "Mary, who hitherto was a virgin," without any adjunct or term of reverence, never alluding either to her influence with God, or to any practice among Christians of invoking her. Of the Incarnation he thus speaks: "This Son of God is our Lord, being the Word of the Father and the Son of Man; since of Mary, who derived her origin from man, and was herself a human being, he had his generation according to man. Wherefore also the Lord Himself gave us a sign in the depth, and height above, which man asked not for, because he hoped not that a virgin could conceive, remaining a virgin, and bring forth a son; and that child is God with us."

Although the expressions of Irenæus as to Mary's unworthy and unjustifiable haste for our Lord to display his power at the marriage feast in Cana, are not so strong in condemnation of her as many which we shall hereafter find in various fathers of the early Church, yet it may be asked would any one holding the doctrines of modern Rome as to the Virgin's perfectness, have given utterance to such sentiments as these which we find in Irenæus⁷:

⁶ See lib. iii. c. 22, p. 220.

⁷ Lib. iii. c. 18, p. 206. 2.

“All these things were foreknown by the Father, but are accomplished by the Son, at the fit time. Wherefore when Mary hastened to the wonderful miracle of the wine, and wished before the time to partake of that cup^a, the Lord repelling her untimely hurrying, said, ‘What have I to do with thee, woman? mine hour is not yet come,’ waiting for that hour which was foreknown by the Father.”

St. Clement of Alexandria, A.D. 190^b.

On this father's testimony, we have little to add to what has been already observed in our examination of his evidence on the invocation of saints and angels. He speaks of Mary, and of her virgin-state when she became a mother, and of the mystery of Christ's birth; but he speaks of her without one word of honour. The language which we before quoted, as used by Clement, to convince the Greeks of their unsoundness in supposing that any beings in the unseen world ought to be worshipped by men, because that for their exalted purity they were permitted by Providence to be conversant about earthly places, and to minister to mortals, is altogether irreconcilable with the idea of his ever having invoked Mary, or sought by prayer her aid.

Tertullian, A.D. 190.

Referring the reader to a former number¹ for Tertullian's evidence generally against the invocation of saints and angels, or any created being, we must here confine ourselves to his testimony as to the worship of

^a The word is *Compendii poculo*—meaning the cup of wine made immediately by Christ, and not through the medium of the grape. Lib. iii. c. 2, p. 219: 2.

^b Oxford, 1715.

¹ No. VII. of these Tracts.

the Virgin Mary. He tells us in one passage, that Christ was born of a virgin, who was also to be once married after his birth, that in Him the two titles of sanctity might be distinctly marked, by a mother who was both a virgin and also once married; but in no passage can we discover any thing approaching the modern doctrine. On the contrary, Tertullian's evidence is not merely negative on this precise point; for, like Chrysostom's and others, his sentiments with regard to the Virgin Mary are altogether conclusive on the subject under investigation. It is inconceivable that any man accustomed, as members of the Roman Church now are, to confide in her merits, to seek her protection and favour, to invoke her name in prayer, and to offer her religious praises, could have entertained such sentiments as we shall now quote, and which Tertullian repeats in other places with only some slight variation of language:

“But what reason is there for the answer which disowned his mother and his brethren? The brothers of the Lord had not believed on Him, as it is contained in the Gospel, which existed before Marcion's time. His mother also is not shown to have adhered to Him, whereas other Marys and Marthas were often in his company. Finally, their unbelief is made manifest by this:—While He was preaching the way of life, while He was preaching the kingdom of God, while He was engaged in curing sicknesses and evils, at a time when strangers were fixedly intent upon Him, then persons so nearly related to Him were absent. At last they come up, and stand outside the door, and do not enter; not thinking, forsooth, of what was going on there: nor do they wait, just as though they were bringing something more urgent than the business in which He was then chiefly occupied. Now, Apelles and Marcion, I ask you if, perchance, when you were playing at chess, or disputing about players or charioteers, you had been called away by such a message, would you not have

said, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?' And while Christ was preaching and setting forth God, fulfilling the law and the prophets, dispersing the darkness of so many ages, did He, without reasonable cause, employ this saying, to strike at the unbelief of those who stood without, or to shake off the importunity of those who were calling Him away from his work?³?"

In another place³, commenting on the same transaction, Tertullian says, "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. Christ, with reason, felt indignant, that while strangers were bent intently on his discourse, persons so nearly related to Him should stand without; seeking, moreover, to call Him away from his solemn work⁴."

Origen, A.D. 230.

In our examination of the testimony of Origen on the subject of invoking, by prayer, saints and angels, we quoted the following passage, which we are induced to repeat here, not only on account of its intrinsic value, but also because it suggests an unanswerable argument against our supposing that the doctrine and practice of the worship of the Virgin derives any countenance from Origen.

"The one God, the God who is over all, is to be propitiated by us, and to be appeased by prayer—the God who is rendered favourable by piety and all virtue. But if Celsus is desirous to propitiate after the Supreme God, some others, also, let him bear in mind, that just as a body in motion is accompanied by the motion of its shadow, so also by rendering the Supreme God favourable, it follows that the person

³ *De Carne Christi*, vii. p. 315.

³ Chrysostom employs stronger language than Tertullian, in reflecting on the conduct of Mary and the Lord's brothers on this occasion.

⁴ *Adv. Marc.* iv. 19, p. 433.

has all his friends, angels, souls, spirits, favourable also; for they sympathise with those who are worthy of God's favour; and not only do they become kindly affected towards the worthy, but they also join with those in their work who desire to worship the Supreme God; and they propitiate him, and pray with us, and supplicate for us. We, therefore, boldly say, that together with men who, on principle, prefer the better part, and pray to God, ten thousands of holy powers join in prayer UNASKED"—[UNBIDDEN, UNCALLED UPON, UNINVOKED.]

What an opportunity had Origen here to state, that though Christians did not call upon angels, and the subordinate divinities of heathenism, yet that, together with other holy persons, objects of their prayers in the unseen world, they called upon the Virgin Mary, the mother of their Saviour, "The Queen of Heaven," "The Gate of Heaven," "The Way to Heaven," in whom "the Supreme God was well pleased," and who could "succour and save whom she would"!

Instead of this we find Origen in one place referring to the Virgin Mary⁵, just as we should ourselves speak of her, as one not like other mothers, but as a pure virgin, and, therefore, not subject to the Levitical law concerning matrons⁶. In another he speaks of "the announcement to Zacharias of the birth of John, and to Mary, of the advent of our Saviour among men", making no difference of dignity between the father of the Baptist, and the mother of our Lord. But not one word is found to intimate Origen's belief, or the belief of the Church at his time, in the influence and advocacy of Mary, or the practice of the Church, or of himself, in praying to her for her succour and intercession.

⁵ Cont. Cels. b. viii. 84, vol. i. p. 789. See also b. viii. vol. i. p. 786; b. v. p. 579; b. viii. p. 751.

⁶ In Levit. Hom. viii. vol. ii. p. 228.

⁷ Comment on John, sec. 24, vol. iv. p. 82.

But the positive testimony of Origen is very strong against the present doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome. The critic and divine M. Huet, charges Origen with holding unsound tenets, "contrary to the doctrine of the Church of Rome at the present day and to the Council of Trent." The third error laid to his charge is that, whereas "the Church and that Council maintain that the Virgin Mary never had sin, Origen holds that she was not only liable to sin, but was actually guilty of it³;" and in proof of this charge Huet quotes Origen's comment of St. Luke, c. ii.

"What is that sword that pierced through the hearts, not only of others, but of Mary also? It is plainly written that at the time of the passion all the Apostles were offended, the Lord Himself saying, 'All you shall be offended this night.' So all were offended to such a degree, that Peter also, the chief of the Apostles, thrice denied Him. What! do we suppose that when the Apostles were offended, the mother of our Lord was free from feeling offence? If she did not feel offence in our Lord's suffering, Jesus did not die for her sins. But if all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified by his grace and redeemed, surely Mary, too, was offended at that time. And this is what Simeon now prophesies, saying, And through thy own soul, thou who knowest that without a husband thou broughtest forth, who didst hear the voice of Gabriel, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee,' shall the sword of unbelief pierce; and thou shalt be struck by the sharp point of doubt, when thou shalt see Him whom thou heardest to be the Son of God, and whom thou knowest that thou broughtest forth without a husband, crucified and dying, and subject to human sufferings⁴."

In the same charge, and not without reason, Huet

³ Vol. iv. p. 156, Appendix. ⁴ Hom. in Luc. xvii. vol. iii. p. 962.

implicates Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril, and others. The fact is, that a large portion of the ancient Fathers of the Church speak freely on the want of faith in the Virgin Mary, or the imperfection and weakness of her faith.

Gregory Thaumaturgus, A.D. 245¹.

The name of this Gregory, a bishop of Cæsarea, in Pontus, was originally Theodorus; and his name Thaumaturgus, or the Wonder-Worker, was given him in consequence of the number of miracles which were ascribed to him. Much of what is doubtful and unsatisfactory hangs over his life, and over the writings now attributed to him. His miracles are such as to have induced most persons to regard them as merely fabulous exaggerations of some acts of benevolence and Christian charity. Among other supernatural works, he is said, by a prayer, to have removed a mountain, which prevented the building of a church; to have dried up a lake which had been the cause of some discord; and by planting his staff on the river Lycus (the staff immediately growing into a tree), to have prevented that river from ever after inundating the land, or extending its flood beyond that tree.

We have already referred to a catalogue of authors and their works, drawn up by Pope Gelasius and a Roman Council, at the close of the fifth century, which admits some works as genuine, and orthodox, and rejects others as apocryphal, or dangerous; and the approved authors are recorded in the Roman canon law as authoritative teachers. But in that catalogue no mention whatever is made either of this Gregory or his works. Still, since Bellarmin and other controversialists often appeal to him, it is not safe to omit all inquiry into his evidence.

¹ Paris, 1622.

He was a disciple of Origen on whom he wrote a panegyric, which Jerome reports to have been extant in his time; he also wrote a work on the Book of Ecclesiastes, also mentioned by Jerome, and which has come down to the present day. In these works, the genuineness of which is not doubted, not the slightest trace can be found of any reference to the Virgin, or any praises to her name.

But to these Vossius added some others, including three discourses delivered in honour of the Virgin, upon the Feast of the Annunciation, which either had never before been brought to light, or had never before been published as Gregory's, one having been previously circulated as a work of Athanasius. These writings are beyond question spurious. In the first place, neither does Jerome in his enumeration of the works of this Gregory, nor does any other ancient writer allude to them. Again, they profess to have been delivered on the Festival of the Annunciation, which is proved by satisfactory arguments not to have been observed before the seventh century. This is shown in the Appendix to the "*Romish Worship of the Virgin*," p. 370, and the proofs need not be repeated here. Many celebrated critics also have pronounced these homilies to be spurious, among whom are Cave and Dupin. Lumper also, at some length, proves them to be of a much later date than Gregory's age. Bellarmin himself rejects at once two of these new works ascribed by Vossius to this Gregory; and of these very homilies he says, "I entertain no certain opinion, for the ancients have made no mention of them, and yet cannot it be proved that they are spurious."

Here we must observe, with surprise and pain, that while Bellarmin², in his zeal to maintain the antiquity of the Feast of the Annunciation, cites the homily (which Vossius here ascribes to Gregory) as

² Bellarmin, Prague, 1721, vol. ii. p. 515. Bellarmin, Cologne, 1617, vol. vii. p. 50.

a homily of St. Athanasius, delivered on that festival; yet in his work on ecclesiastical writers, he condemns the very same homily as a forgery, declaring the evidence against it to be irresistible. But Vossius, laying aside the character of a judge, and acting the part of a panegyrist, converts his editorial preface into a rhapsody, in which he implores the Virgin to make him an ample return out of the abundant treasure of her grace, in consideration of his having done so much for her in the way of encomiums and eulogies. We might well have added extracts from his preface to the instances which we have given in a former number, of the practical working of the system of the worship of the Virgin. He dedicates the edition to St. Gregory Thaumaturgus and the Virgin Mary jointly, and among his variously combined acts of prayer and praise, are the following :

“ My mind is astounded, my memory fails, my utterance languishes, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws, while I strive as a herald to celebrate thy praise, O most holy Virgin, mother of God, Mary ! and hold before my mind the mirror of thy heroic virtues.

“ Here I will make an end ; and I pray and beseech thee, O Gregory, together with the most glorious and most holy mother of God, Mary the Virgin, that ye will at all times undertake the patronage of me, that ye will join your prayers with mine, and never cease to intercede for me with the most merciful God, and that THROUGH YOU, after this frail, sad, and short life ended, I may be deemed worthy to reach the life truly blessed and eternal.

“ Hail, Mother, the Heaven, the Virgin, the Throne, and of our Church the honour, and glory, and strength ! Hail thou, the comfort and ready help of those in danger, who have recourse to thee ! Hail, refuge of sinners, help of all the good and afflicted, the fountain of grace and OF ALL COMFORT. Hail, best mediatrix between God and man ! Hail, sure

and unfailing protection of us all ! Hail, ONLY relief of the troubles and disturbances of this life ! Hail, ONLY hope of the desponding, succour of the oppressed, and present help of those who fly to thee ! Hail, gate and key of heaven's kingdom, the ladder and the way upwards of all the elect ! To thee we cry ; remember us, O most holy Mother and Virgin ; remember, I say, and IN RETURN FOR THESE ENCOMIUMS AND EULOGIES GIVE US BACK great gifts, out of the riches of thy so abundant graces."

It is no longer matter of wonder that Vossius should be anxious to make so early a writer as Gregory Thaumaturgus the author of homilies in honour of the Virgin, when we thus find him praying for great gifts expressly in return for the abundance of his praises of her ; but it is matter of wonder that such homilies should be now appealed to, as containing Gregory's testimony, though they had never been published or enumerated among his works, or referred to as his, or even heard of, for at least thirteen hundred years !

Methodius³.

It is not less matter of wonder to find a work formerly attributed to Methodius, a bishop of Tyre, in the third century, still quoted as genuine, though the best critics, some of them Roman Catholic editors, have long ago pronounced the homily now cited as evidence of the early invocation of the Virgin, to be the production of a much later age. It is indeed surprising to see with what eagerness and pertinacity the advocates of the worship of the Virgin enlist in their service every work which has ever had the name of an ancient writer attached to it—not only treatises of disputed and doubtful genuineness, but also works,

³ Methodius, Paris, 1644.

which for centuries have been denounced by the most enlightened writers even of their own Church as decidedly spurious. We are reminded at every step of the confession of the Bourdeaux editor of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, that overpowered by the evidence against the record contained in it of the Virgin's Assumption, he would have expunged it from his edition, were it not from his knowledge that nothing certain as to the Assumption of the Virgin could be substituted in its stead.

With regard to the homily of Methodius, now quoted as genuine, we need only remark that the Benedictine editor of Jerome ⁴ says, once for all, that the *Symposium* is the only entire work of Methodius extant; that Baronius ⁵ says expressly, "I do not hesitate to say, that no Greek or Latin writer has left a sermon delivered on the Feast of the Purification before the fifteenth year of Justinian, on which feast this homily, attributed to Methodius, purports to have been delivered;" and that Lumper ⁶ shows beyond question that this homily is of a much later age than Methodius. It is said that the style of this sermon closely resembles the style of the *Symposium*; but we all know that in writings, no less than in paintings, resemblance is often a most fallacious criterion, and never must be allowed to counterbalance clear and decided evidence against the genuineness of a work. Not only, however, does the argument from the Feast of the Purification exclude this homily from the works of Methodius of Tyre, but the theological language also of the homily itself proves it to belong to a period much later; for the writer evidently employs expressions to guard against the Arian heresy, and seems to make extracts from the Nicene Creed. Even were the work genuine, instead of being pal-

⁴ Jerom. vol. ii. p. 910.

⁵ Baronius, Paris, 1607, p. 57.

⁶ Lumper, Part xiii. p. 474.

pably spurious, its oratorical figures afford almost as strong a demonstration of his having believed that the city of Jerusalem could hear his salutation, as that the Virgin could listen to his prayers; for he addresses the same "Hail" to the Holy City, as he does to Mary and Simeon, calling it "The earthly Heaven."

St. Cyprian, A.D. 258'.

We have already seen how powerfully and affectingly this celebrated father has written on the subject of prayer; and had he ever addressed himself to the Virgin, invoking her succour or imploring her intercession, his line of argument in many of his productions would have led naturally to an expression of his sentiments in that respect. No trace, however, of such belief or practice can be discovered in all his various works; nor can we find one word expressive of reverence towards her, or referring to her merits, or her influence with God; nor is her name alluded to by his correspondent Firmilian, bishop of Cappadocia.

Lactantius, A.D. 280—317.

We have seen also, in a former number, how decidedly the testimony of Lactantius bears against the doctrine of the adoration of any other being than God, and of the intercession of any other mediator than Christ. On our present subject, the following is among the few passages to which we need make any reference:—

"Christ was, therefore, both God and man; appointed as mediator between God and man; whence the Greeks call Him *Μεσότην* (Mediator), that he might bring man to God, that is, to immortality; because

' Paris, 1726.

had He been only God, He could not have given a pattern to man; if He had been only man, He could not have compelled man to justice, had not a power and authority greater than man's been added."

Lactantius speaks of a "Holy Virgin" chosen for the office which she sustained, but not one word looking to adoration. He dwells on the incarnation of the Son of God; and had he or his fellow-believers paid religious honour to Mary, it is incredible that he would have avoided all allusion to her advocacy and power.

This brings us beyond the close of the third century.

Eusebius, A.D. 314.

The testimony of Eusebius on any subject connected with primitive faith and practice has been always appealed to as an authority not to be lightly gainsaid. We have already seen how far removed he is from giving any countenance to the invocation of saints and angels; and in his works, voluminous and diversified as they are in point of subject, we find no single passage to justify the belief that the primitive Church supplicated the Virgin Mary, either to impart to the supplicants any favour, or to pray for them.

Eusebius speaks of the Virgin Mary, but is altogether silent as to any religious honour of any kind being offered to her, and that in passages where he could not have omitted all reference to it, had it at all really existed.

In the oration of the Emperor Constantine, as it is recorded by Eusebius*, direct mention is made of "the chaste Virginité," and of "the maid who was the mother of God, and yet remained a virgin." But the object present to the author's mind was so exclu-

* Aug. Taurin. (Triers), 1746, vol. i. p. 624.

sively God manifest in the flesh, that he does not throughout even mention the name of Mary, much less does he allude to any religious honour due or paid to her.

Apostolical Canons and Constitutions.

These documents, though confessedly not of the apostolic age, have been always regarded as interesting monuments of the primitive Church; and probably we shall not err in fixing their date at a period not earlier than the beginning of the fourth century. In these we find rules for the conduct of public worship, and forms of prayer for private use; forms also of creeds and confessions; but not one single allusion appears in them throughout to any religious address to the Virgin, or any reference to her power, influence, merits, or intercession. Occasions most opportune for the introduction of such doctrine and practice are repeatedly occurring. Again and again is prayer directed to be made to the one true God, exclusively of any other object of worship, and exclusively too through the mediation and intercession of the one only Saviour.

The Apostolical Constitutions, in which there is reference made to the mother of our Lord, can scarcely be read by any one without leaving a clear and strong impression on the mind, that no religious worship was paid to the Virgin Mary when they were written; and certainly not more of honour than is now cheerfully paid to her by members of the Church of England. If, for example, we take the prayer prescribed to be used on the appointment of a deaconess, the inference from it must be, that others, with whom the Spirit of the Lord had dwelt, were held in equal honour with Mary. "O eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of male and female, who didst fill with thy Spirit Miriam, and Hannah, and Huldah, and didst not disdain that thy Son should be born of a

woman, &c.” In another passage the Virgin is spoken of just as other women who had the gift of prophecy; and of her equally and jointly with the others, it is said that they were not elated by the gift. “But even have women prophesied in ancient times, Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses; after her, Deborah; and afterwards, Huldah and Judith; and the mother of the Lord also prophesied, and Elizabeth, her kinswoman, and Anna; and in our days the daughters of Philip; yet they were not lifted up against the men, but observed their own measure. Therefore, among you, should any man or woman have such a grace, let them be humble, that God may take pleasure in them¹.”

In the Apostolical Canons we find no allusion to the Virgin Mary. The last clause of all contains the benediction; and gives us an example of a primitive prayer offered to God alone, through Christ alone, without any reference to the intercession and advocacy, or merits and glory of his mother. “Now may God, the only unproduced Being, the Creator of all things, unite you all by peace in the Holy Ghost, make you perfect unto every good work, not to be turned aside, unblameable, not deserving reproof; and may He deem you worthy of eternal life with us, by the mediation of his beloved Son Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour, with whom be glory to Him, the Sovereign God and Father in the Holy Ghost the Comforter, now and ever, world without end. Amen.”

St. Athanasius, A.D. 350.

We have already seen what strong and decisive testimony is borne by this renowned defender of the Christian faith against any invocation of saints and angels. In what broad contrast does his un-

¹ Book viii. c. 20.

¹ Book viii. c. 2.

qualified and unlimited declaration, that no Christian could ask a blessing from God AND ANY CREATED BEING, stand with a prayer, said to have been approved by Pope Pius VI.: "Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, I offer you my heart and my soul. Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, assist me in my last agony. Jesus, Joseph, and Mary, may my soul expire in peace with you!" Such things are now in the Church of Rome, but in the primitive and Catholic Church they were not so.

St. Athanasius, ever bent on establishing the perfect divinity and humanity of Christ, thus speaks: "The general scope of Holy Scripture is to make a general announcement concerning the Saviour, that He was always God, and is a Son, being the Word, and the brightness and wisdom of the Father; and that He afterwards became man for us, taking flesh of the Virgin Mary, who bare God."

On a careful examination of the works of St. Athanasius, not one single passage can be discovered indicative of any worship of the Virgin, or any belief in her power and intercession, or any invocation of her, even for her prayers.

Before we leave the testimony of Athanasius, we have a duty to perform which the cause of truth compels us not to neglect. We are anxious in these treatises to avoid whatever might be so construed as to savour of a personal charge; but we must here lay open before the world an instance of those many unworthy expedients by which the worship of the Virgin Mary is attempted to be upheld in our own country, in our own times, and by persons whose authority seems to have assumed a high place in the Roman Church.

A homily, formerly ascribed to St. Athanasius, but which has been for centuries rejected as spurious and apocryphal, continues to be quoted, even at the present day, as his genuine testimony, without the slightest

intimation of any doubt as to its author. Bellarmin so appealed to it in his day; and had he been the only writer, or the last writer, who had so cited it we might merely have referred to the judgment of the Benedictine editors, who have, since Bellarmin's time, classed this homily among those spurious works which had been without reason attributed to Athanasius²: Or rather we might have referred the whole matter to Bellarmin himself; for it is no less true than extraordinary, that whereas in his anxiety to enlist every ancient writer in the cause of the invocation of saints and the worship of the Virgin, Bellarmin has cited this homily in his *Church Triumphant*, as containing the words of Athanasius, without alluding to its spuriousness, or even to any doubt attached to it: yet in his review of Ecclesiastical writers³, when pronouncing judgment on the different works assigned to Athanasius, he himself condemns this same homily as a palpable forgery, declaring the evidence against it to be irresistible. But in our own times, Dr. Wiseman, Roman bishop of Melipotamus, thus introduces and comments upon a passage, or rather different sentences made into one passage, drawn from the same homily⁴:

“St. Athanasius, the most zealous and strenuous supporter that the Church ever possessed of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and consequently of his infinite superiority over all the saints, thus enthusiastically addresses his ever-blessed mother: ‘Hear now, O daughter of David, incline thine ear to our prayers; we raise our cry to thee. Remember us, O most holy Virgin, and for the feeble eulogiums we give thee, grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces, thou that art full of grace. Hail! Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Queen, and Mother of God, intercede for us.’ Mark well these words, ‘grant us

² Vol. ii. p. 390. 401.

³ Bellarmin, *de Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*, Cologne, 1617, vol. vii. p. 50.

⁴ Dr. Wiseman's *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 108. London: Booker, 1836.

great gifts from the treasures of thy graces,' as if he hoped directly to receive them from her. Do Catholics use stronger words than these; or did Athanasius think or speak with us or with Protestants'?"

To these questions the direct answer is, that neither these words, nor the homily from which they are extracted, ever came from the pen of Athanasius; and moreover, that the proofs of the spuriousness of the homily are drawn out at large by the Benedictine editors, in the very edition and the identical volume of the works of Athanasius, to which Dr. Wiseman refers for his authority when he quotes the passage as genuine.

The above quotation (made up of different sentences, selected from different clauses, and put together so as to make one paragraph) is found in a homily called "On the Annunciation of the Mother of God." Two centuries and a half ago, and repeatedly since, (how long before we know not,) it has been condemned as totally and indisputably spurious; and has been excluded from the works of Athanasius as a wretched forgery, not by members only of the Reformed Church, but by most zealous adherents to the Church of Rome.

The Benedictine editors, who published the remains of Athanasius in 1698, declared this homily to be a forgery, assigning their own reasons for their decisions, and fortifying their own verdict by quoting at length the letter written upon the subject more than a century before by the celebrated Baronius to our countryman Stapleton. Both these documents are very interesting, and compel us at every turn to renew our astonishment that such a homily should be so quoted in the present day without any allusion to its spurious character.

The principal arguments urged by the Benedictines, and by Baronius before them, will be found in "The Romish Worship of the Virgin," p. 168; we can only make two or three extracts.

⁶ Dr. Wiseman's note refers us to "Serm. in Annunc. t. ii. p. 401."

The Benedictine editors thus begin their preface :—
“That this discourse is spurious, THERE IS NO LEARNED MAN WHO DOES NOT NOW ADJUDGE. The style proves itself, more clear than the sun, to be different from the style of Athanasius. Besides this, very many trifles show themselves here, unworthy of any sensible man, not to say of Athanasius; and a multitude of expressions unknown to Athanasius, so that it savours of lower Greek. . . .” After stating facts which entirely exclude the homily from the age of Athanasius, they add, “But we would here subjoin the dissertation of Baronius on the subject sent to us by our brethren from Rome.”

That dissertation is contained in a letter, dated Rome, Nov. 1592, to Stapleton, in consequence of some animadversions and remonstrances of his, conveyed through Cardinal Allen, against Baronius, for having deprived the Church of such a testimony. Baronius says, the little he had before written was quite enough to show that the homily was spurious, and he is sure that all persons of LEARNING, WHO WERE DESIROUS OF THE TRUTH, would freely agree with him. He adds, moreover, that many had expressed their agreement with him; congratulating him on having separated legitimate from spurious children. He conceives that the homily could not have been written till after the heresy of the Monothelites had been spread abroad; and this would fix its date subsequently to the commencement of the SEVENTH century, 300 years after Athanasius had attended the Council of Nice.

Among the last words of Baronius in this letter, we read a sentiment worthy of a sincere Christian and an honest and enlightened critic, the neglect of which leads to such proceedings as we are now lamenting; and the uniform adoption of which, on all sides, would bring controversy within narrower limits, and convert it from angry warfare into a friendly comparison of opinions.

“I do not consider that these sentiments concerning

Athanasius are affirmed with any injury to the Church: the Church suffers no loss on this account; who, being the pillar and ground of the truth, very far shrinks from seeking, like *Æsop's jackdaw*, helps and ornaments which are not her own; the bare truth shines more beautiful in its own naked simplicity."

And yet, notwithstanding this utter repudiation of the whole homily as a work falsely attributed to Athanasius; after its unqualified condemnation by Cardinal Bellarmin; after the Benedictine editors, in the very volume to which the reference is made, have declared that there was no learned man who did not adjudge it to be spurious, the gross forgery being self-condemned by evidence clearer than the sun; after Baronius, the great Roman authority, has assured us that ALL LEARNED MEN DESIROUS OF THE TRUTH would agree with him in rejecting it as spurious—after all this, it is quoted at the present day in evidence as the genuine work of St. Athanasius, the quotation being closed by this triumphant question, "Did Athanasius think and speak with us, or with Protestants?"

THE END.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XIII.

ON THE
WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.
EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AGAINST IT.—*Continued.*



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued, on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published:—

- I. ON THE SUPREMACY OF THE POPE.
- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
- IX. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—PRACTICAL WORKING OF THE SYSTEM.
- X. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AGAINST IT.
- XI. ON THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.
- XII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- XIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XIV. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XV. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

On the Worship of the Virgin Mary.—Evidence of the Primitive Church against it.—From the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, to the end of the fourth century.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, A.D. 340¹.

THE link in the chain of primitive writers which connects the testimonies of those who flourished before or at the time of the Nicene Council, with those who followed it, is Cyril, archbishop of Jerusalem. This celebrated and revered patriarch was probably born about ten years before that Council, and was ordained Deacon by Macarius, and Priest by Maximus, who were his immediate predecessors in the episcopate of Jerusalem, and both of whom are thought to have attended at Nice.

The principal work of Cyril, which has also been generally ranked among the most interesting remains of antiquity, consists of eighteen catechetical lectures delivered to candidates for baptism through the weeks before Easter, and five addressed after that festival to those who had been then admitted into the Church. These lectures take so wide and so general a view of all the doctrines of Christianity, that we can scarcely

¹ Oxford, 1766. Paris, 1726. Venice, 1763.

find a single point of theology altogether omitted. Cyril professes to instruct the catechumens in every branch of divine knowledge ; and if prayers and supplications to the Virgin had then found a place among the devotions of the faithful, we cannot conceive that no mention whatever would have been made of such a duty or practice, nor any expression have fallen from him which could be supposed to allude to it. Such, however, is the fact ; and that too, not only when his subject might appear to lead his thoughts into another channel, but when his line of argument would naturally suggest a reference to the religious honours paid to the Virgin. Rather we would say, the total omission of her name affords in various instances conclusive evidence, that the belief and practice of the Roman Church in the present day had no place in the Christian Church in the days of Cyril.

Let us take as an example the present confession and the present prayers in the Romish mass, both before and after the consecration of the host, and compare them with the record given of corresponding addresses in the time of Cyril. The confession begins thus : "I confess to God Almighty, to the blessed Mary ever Virgin, to the blessed Michael the Archangel, to the blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul," &c. Again, in the prayer before consecration we now find these sentiments— "Communicating with, and venerating the memory of, in the first place, the glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ ; and likewise of the blessed Apostles and Martyrs," &c. And in the prayer after consecration, this supplication is offered— "Deliver us, O Lord, we beseech thee, from all evils, present, past, and to come ; and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God, with thy blessed Apostles," &c.

But Cyril, describing the order in the celebration of the holy Eucharist observed in his day, though he tells us that they made mention of archangels, Apostles,

and martyrs, yet makes no allusion whatever to the Virgin Mary²:

"After this, (after the priest has said, 'Let us give thanks to the Lord,' and the people have responded, 'It is meet and right,') we make mention of the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the stars, and all the creation, rational and irrational, visible and invisible, angels, archangels, &c., virtually employing the expression of David, 'Magnify the Lord with me.' Then we make mention also of those who have fallen asleep before us, first patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, *that by their prayers and intercessions God would receive our supplications*."

If the Church of Christ taught then as the Church of Rome now teaches, that the Virgin Mary was "exalted, above the choir of angels, unto the kingdom of heaven, to the ethereal chamber in which the King of kings sits on his starry throne," could Cyril of Jerusalem, when detailing with such minuteness the various particulars of the service which he daily witnessed, have omitted all mention of her name?

In this interesting compendium of Christian doctrine, Cyril dwells with much fulness of argument and illustration on the divine generation of Christ by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. With evident anxiety, he exposes the baneful heresy of those who held that our Lord was not born of a Virgin, but was the son of Joseph and Mary. In the course of his argument, proving Christ to be "God of the substance of his Father begotten before the worlds, and man of the substance of his mother born in the world," many occasions offer themselves, not only admitting but calling for a statement of the doctrine of the Church, had the Church of Christ then held the present doctrine of the Church of Rome; and yet not

² Cat. Myst. v. 5, 6.

³ It has been maintained that the words in italics are an interpolation of a much later age. If this be so, our argument only becomes stronger.

one word occurs throughout as to her nature, or character, or as to her advocacy with God, or any invocation of her for her intercession or patronage. Cyril speaks of her as the "pure and holy Virgin," he speaks of Christ as "God born of the Virgin." He applies to her as ante-Nicene Fathers did, the word *theotocos*, "she who gave birth to him who was God." But we find no allusion to her birth, or her death, or her state after death. Not a syllable occurs which would lead us to suppose that the Christian Catechist of Jerusalem, in the middle of the fourth century, thought of the Virgin Mary, or acted towards her otherwise than true members of the Church of England now think and act. In all his arguments and statements he exalts God alone, and speaks of the blessed Mary only as we speak of her, as a pure and holy virgin, the instrument in God's providence of effecting the miraculous birth of Him who made all things. The evidence of Cyril is irrefutable against the prevalence of any religious worship offered to her in his day. The following passage we are induced to quote, because it expresses simply but powerfully a principle of prime importance to us all:

"The Father, through the Son, with the Holy Ghost, dispenses every grace. The gifts of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, are not different each from the other. For one is the salvation, one the power, one the faith. One God, the Father; one Lord, his only begotten Son; one the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. And to know this is all we need. But do not busy yourself about his nature and substance; for had it been written, we would have told you of it. On what is not written let us not venture. It is abundantly sufficient for us to know for our salvation, that there is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

* See Cat. xvi. 12.

St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, A.D. 350¹.

While Cyril, archbishop of Jerusalem, enables us to infer that in the east the Church of Christ was in his time free from the worship of the Virgin Mary, his contemporary, Hilary, establishes the same fact as to the west. Hilary is said to have been born at Poitiers, of which city he became bishop about the year 350, or 355. Having presided over that see with chequered fortune, but with untarnished character, for about twelve years, proving himself to be one of the brightest ornaments of the Gallican Church, he was called from his persecutions and his honours here to that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

The chief works of Hilary now extant, are his *Commentaries on the Psalms*, and on the Gospel of *St. Matthew*, and his book on the Holy Trinity.

In his interpretation of the Psalms, his general principle of representing the Psalmist as speaking in the person of the Saviour, or of his faithful disciples, and giving to each Psalm a Christian application, leads him to speak continually of the Saviour's incarnation; and thus an occasion would have frequently offered itself for Hilary to express his sentiments as to the station and nature of the Virgin Mary, had any such views as Roman Catholics now entertain been familiar to his mind. On the contrary, he never refers to any especial honour paid to her by himself or his fellow Christians. She is not alluded to as exercising any patronage, or having any power or influence in heaven or on earth, or as having been already received into glory.

Hilary, together with the great body of the earliest Christian writers, is clear in the statement of his belief, that the angels are messengers between heaven and earth, bearing the prayers of the faithful to God's

¹ Ed. Paris, 1693. Verona, 1730.

throne, and conveying blessings down to those who love Him. He speaks with honour and gratitude of the Apostles, Evangelists, Martyrs, and Patriarchs, as objects of our pious contemplation; though he explicitly warns us, that our help can come from God only, and that the Saviour Himself is the only ground of our hope. But of the Virgin Mary (except in one passage, in which he tells us that even she herself, though the mother of our Lord, must yet undergo the general judgment,) he speaks only as Mary, or the Virgin; and that, not with any reference to her exalted station and character, nor (excepting in as much as she was a pure virgin) to any honour due to her; but solely with reference to her having been the mother of Christ. Indeed, how very far he was from entertaining those sentiments towards her which are cherished by the Church of Rome, we have a striking evidence (among many others) in his manner of adverting, on two occasions, to the announcement of our Saviour's name by the angel to Joseph. "Now, our word SAVIOUR is, in the Hebrew, JESUS." And this the angel confirms, when speaking of Mary to Joseph: 'She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins⁶.' Repeating this same sentiment in another Psalm, Hilary employs the same words, except that he omits all mention of the Virgin.

In his comment⁷ on St. Matthew, this father animadverts on the misrepresentations of irreligious men, who took occasion from the words of Scripture to form an unworthy estimate of the Virgin's character; and he maintains that she had no children by Joseph after our Saviour's birth, a point which we, with his pious contemporary Basil, whose testimony we must soon examine, may well leave as Scripture has left it.

The passage, however, to which we have already adverted, and in which he speaks of the necessity

⁶ Ps. lxi. ver. p. 210, and Ps. li. p. 93.

⁷ Matt. i. p. 662.

under which the Virgin Mary, though the mother of our Lord, lay, not less than others, of undergoing the final judgment, requires the especial consideration of all who would defend the present Roman doctrine by the evidence of the writers of the primitive Church. In laying this passage side by side with the sentiments elsewhere expressed by Hilary, as to the persons who will be judged, we express no opinion as to the soundness of his doctrine, or the accuracy of his quotations, or on his interpretation of Scripture. If his views approve themselves as correct, that will add nothing to the strength of our argument; if otherwise, that will not detract at all from its force; the simple question being, What is Hilary's evidence on the worship and invocation of the Virgin Mary? We find that he never speaks of her as an object of religious reverence; and we now ask, Had Hilary entertained towards her such sentiments as we find at this day expressed in the authorized services of the Roman Church, could he have written such passages as the following?—"He who believeth in me is not judged, but passeth from death unto life; but he who believeth not is already judged.' Since then the saint is not to be judged, who is to pass from death unto life, and the unbeliever is already adjudged to punishment; it is understood that judgment is left for those who, according to the nature of their deeds between sins and faith, are to be judged*."

"The Prophet remembered that it was a hard thing and most perilous, for human nature to desire God's judgment; for since no man living is clean in his sight, how can his judgment be desirable? Since we must render an account of every idle word, shall we desire the judgment day, in which we must undergo that incessant fire, and those severe punishments of a soul to be cleansed from sin? A sword shall pass through the soul of the blessed Mary, that the

* Ps. lvii. p. 143.

thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. If that Virgin who conceived God is to come into the severity of judgment, who will dare to be judged by God? ”

Some passages ascribed to Hilary are constantly appealed to in vindication of the worship of the Virgin, in which the author contrasts the evil brought into the world by Eve with the blessing of which the Virgin Mary was the channel. But how unsound is that argument, is clearly evinced by the following, among other passages, in which he does not allude to the Virgin at all, though he is contrasting the original source of sin and misery derived from a woman, with the restoration of fallen man by Christ made known by a kind of retribution first to women.

“ But in as much as some poor women (*mulierculæ*) see our Lord first, salute Him, fall down at his knees, are commanded to bear the tidings to the Apostle, the order of the original curse is reversed; so that as death came by that sex, so to it the glory, and sight, and fruit, and tidings of the resurrection should first be made¹. ”

It would be an easy and a pleasing task, did not our present object preclude us from entering upon it, to quote passages truly interesting and edifying to Christians, which would put in a clear and strong light the spiritual character of the religion of Hilary. At one time he exposes, in awakening language, the dangers which beset us on every side. He describes the perils to which every department of nature gives birth, and against which the Christian must be ever on his guard: the very gems of unknown seas, and gold dug from the bowels of the earth, tempting us to covetousness; the troubles of life, the unholy desires of our fellow-creatures, the example and influence of those in high places soliciting us to sin, with a seductiveness too powerful for our frail nature to withstand. Then he bids us look to God, Almighty and

Ps. cxviii. p. 294.

¹ St. Matt. chap. xxviii. p. 810.

Omnipresent, assuring us that He will never forsake the man who trusts in Him, but will give him strength against every enemy to his salvation, and bring him safe to Himself at last. At another time he invites us to look to the angels and prophets, who are employed by their heavenly Master in forwarding our salvation by their ministry, admonishing us, in contemplation of their offices of obedience and love, to lift our hearts heavenward; but ever looking beyond them to Him alone, from whom every good and perfect gift comes down on sinful and redeemed man².

To confess God as our help³, and to know that God for our sakes became man, St. Hilary declares to be a true confession, a never-failing hope. His description of the Christian's day, as it was passed by him and his fellow-disciples, must close our present reference to his highly valuable remains:

The day is open'd with prayers to God;
The day is closed with hymns to God⁴.

Macarius, A.D. 350.

Macarius, of Egypt, flourished about the middle of the fourth century. Fifty of his discourses have come down to our day. In these he speaks much of the virgin pureness with which the soul and body of a Christian must be dedicated to God; but though there was ample room, and frequent opportunities might have offered themselves for referring to the Virgin Mary (which more recent writers, in their anxiety to exalt her, seldom neglect), yet he never refers to her once, except as the mother of whom Christ took his human nature; telling us that the body which Christ took of Mary he lifted upon the cross⁵.

² Ps. cxx. p. 379.

⁴ Ps. lxiv.

³ Ps. cxxi. and cxxii. p. 444.

⁵ Paris, 1622. Hom. xi. p. 61.

He never calls the Virgin Mary the "Spouse of God;" but he represents the human soul created in the image of God, and after the fall purified by the Holy Spirit, and prepared for the heavenly visitor, as that spouse⁶.

This author speaks beautifully of prayer and praise, but God is the only object of them. In him we look in vain for a distinction of supreme worship for God, and next to that a worship for the Virgin. And especially in his 20th Homily, his sentiments are so utterly inconsistent with the modern doctrine of a Christian's looking to the Virgin for his remedy, the enlightening and guiding of his mind, his salvation from sin, and safety in death; and they are in themselves so full of the truths of the Gospel, in its primitive simplicity, bidding us to approach God alone in Christ, and to place our hope and trust in no other guide, physician, restorer, advocate, or patron, that no one, we are persuaded, can read them without satisfaction and benefit. In the works of Macarius, there is no suggestion of another Giver to whom we should look than God; no Virgin to whom or through whom we should apply for Divine mercies; no Mediator, except our Lord only; with him, God in Christ is all in all.

St. Epiphanius, A.D. 370'.

Epiphanius was bishop of Salamis, in the island of Cyprus, a few years after the middle of the fourth century. Among his genuine productions, the most important is his work on the heresies which had then already risen to distract the peace of the Church.

In ascertaining his testimony on the invocation of the Virgin Mary, our attention will of necessity be chiefly directed to his discussion of the heresies relative to herself; indeed, few passages besides call for any notice. The panegyric on "The Mother of

⁶ Hom. xlvij. p. 233.

⁷ Paris, 1622.

God," bound up with his works, is confessedly of a much later date¹.

With many others, Epiphanius regarded those Christians as heretical who held that the Virgin lived with Joseph as his wife, after she had given birth to our Lord; and he always speaks of her with reverence, because of the mystery of the incarnation, which she was the chosen human instrument of effecting. Throughout, his anxiety seems to be to give her the honour due to her office and character; he speaks with indignation of those who could entertain disparaging views of her unsullied purity and holiness; and he had no doubt of her future perfect bliss, both body and soul, in the eternal kingdom of her Son. But of her "immaculate conception," "her assumption, body and soul, into heaven," her "exaltation to glory above the highest angels," her "omnipotent intercession with the Almighty," the Church's "prayers to God for the blessings of her mediation," of her being the channel "through which every blessing must flow that comes from heaven to man," of the faithful "suppliantly invoking her, and flying to her prayers, help, and assistance;" of all these points, Epiphanius seems to have known nothing. On the contrary, his testimony is conclusive against the existence of any such doctrines prevailing in the Church as a body, or among Christians individually, in his time.

The following is an extract from his arguments against Marcion², in which Epiphanius thus expresses his assurance of the Virgin Mary's freedom from actual sin, and of her final salvation:—

"'Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' He accuses not all flesh; for how could that flesh be accused which never committed any of the above-mentioned acts? But I will prove the point by other arguments, 'Who, he says, shall lay any

¹ See Fabricius, vol. viii. p. 275, and Ondin, vol. ii. p. 318.

² P. 352.

thing to the charge of God's elect?" How will the holy Mary, with her flesh, not inherit the kingdom of God, who was never guilty of fornication, or uncleanness, or adultery, or any of those irremediable works of the flesh?"

In his dissertations on those heresies, which related to the nature, character, and office of the Virgin, he confesses that he had great difficulty in ascertaining the precise views of misbelievers; and that some opinions reported to him were so monstrous in absurdity and impiety, that he could scarcely bring himself to believe what he had read. He then mentions three distinct opinions or practices, which he calls heresies:

First, of those who denied the perfect incarnation of Christ; some of whom maintained that he brought his body down with Him from heaven¹!

Secondly, of those who held that after Christ's birth, Mary lived with Joseph as his wife².

Thirdly, of those who, on certain days, religiously offered cakes to her and worshipped her³.

In his dissertations on these opinions and practices, he quotes in full the letter⁴ which he had written to his fathers, brothers, and children in Christ, who had been troubled by these doctrines. With regard to the Virgin, he indignantly asks, how could any one dare to speak disparagingly of her, who was selected out of so many thousands to be the mother of our Lord? and while he urges that those who honour God will honour his saints, he declares that as to her death and burial he will affirm nothing⁵, because Scripture is so silent on the point, as not even to tell whether St. John took her with him in his journeys to those countries through which he preached the Gospel.

On the first heresy, Epiphanius observes, "The body of the Saviour, born of Mary according to the Scripture, was a human and a true body. It was

¹ P. 995. ² P. 1033. ³ P. 1057. ⁴ P. 1034. ⁵ P. 1043.

a true body, since it was the same with our own; for Mary is our sister, since we all came from Adam⁶." He afterwards proceeds thus, "Just as the perverse views of some heretics denying the Godhead of the Saviour, and severing Him from the Father, drove others to the opposite error, and provoked them to say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, were one and the same person; so the unworthy doctrines reflecting on the Virgin, drove some to the opposite extreme, and provoked them to pay her divine worship; making her a deity, offering cakes in her name, and striving to honour her beyond due measure."

Having then referred to former instances of the tendency of mankind to superstition ever restless, and fond of novelty (such as was the worship paid to the daughters both of Pharaoh and Jephtha), he immediately adds these truly striking expressions: "Whether the holy Virgin be dead and buried, in that case her death is in honour, her end in purity, and her crown in virginhood; or whether she was slain (as it is written, a sword shall pierce through her soul also,) her glory is among martyrs, and the holy body of her, by whom light rose on the world, is in the midst of blessings; or whether she remained (for it is not impossible for God to do whatsoever he wishes, FOR HER END IS NOT KNOWN), we must not honour the saints beyond due measure, but honour their Lord. Let, then, the error of those deceived people cease. For neither is Mary a deity, nor deriving her body from heaven, but from the intercourse of a man and a woman; determined, as Isaac's was, by promise. And let no one make offerings to her name, for he destroys his own soul; nor, on the other hand, let him be so intoxicated as to insult the holy Virgin."

In all these dissertations, Epiphanius alludes to no

⁶ P. 1066.

especial honour due to the Virgin above other saints; but as he began his letter to the Arabian Christians, by charging men to bring no calumnies against the Virgin (for if they honoured God they would honour his saints), so he ends the letter with these sentiments:

“The saints are in honour; their rest is in glory; their departure hence is in perfectness; their lot is blessedness; their society is with the angels in holy mansions; their dwelling is in heaven; their conversation is in divine writings; their glory is in honour beyond calculation and continuous; their rewards are in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom, and with whom, be glory to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, for ever’.”

His dissertation on the Collyridian heresy (so called from *the small cakes* offered to the Virgin) he prefaces by stating that opposite extremes are both bad, and the mischief is equal in both these errors; on the one hand, of those who make light of the holy Virgin, and on the other, of those who extol her beyond due measure. He then tells us, that this heresy took its rise entirely from women, who were in the habit of forming a quadrangular seat, spreading a napkin, putting bread upon it, and offering it to Mary’s name; and he prays God to enable him to cut up this heresy by the roots.

He begins by showing, that through the Old Testament we never find women exercising the priestly office; and under the New, if women were to be allowed to exercise it, or be engaged in any of the canonical ordinances of the Church, it would rather have become Mary herself, the mother of our Lord, to discharge that office. But that was not allowed; nor was even baptism committed to her. Having, then, described the tendency of men’s minds,

at the suggestion of the devil, to pay mortals divine honours, departing from their allegiance to the one only God, and worshipping dead men, and their lifeless images, Epiphanius thus anticipates and answers the objections of those, who favoured these errors:

“Nay, but the body of Mary is holy! Yes, but not a deity. Nay, but the Virgin is a virgin and honoured! Yes, yet not given for us to worship, but herself worshipping Him who was born of her in the flesh. Thus the Gospel confirms us, saying, in the words of our Lord, ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee?’ lest any should think that the holy Virgin was a BEING OF SUPERIOR EXCELLENCE, He calls her ‘woman,’ as if He prophesied on account of those divisions and heresies which were to take place on earth,—in order that no ONE BY ADMIRING THE HOLY VIRGIN IN EXCESS, might fall into this folly of heresy. The whole story is full of absurdity. For what Scripture speaks of it? Which of the Prophets ever suffered a man to be worshipped, not to say a woman? She is a chosen vessel, but she is a woman, and not at all changed in nature; though as to her mind and sense she is held in honour; as the bodies of the saints, or whatever else in point of honour I might mention as more excellent; as Elijah, a virgin from his birth, and continuing so throughout, and being taken up did not see death; as John, who lay upon the bosom of our Lord, whom Jesus loved; as the holy Thecla; and as Mary honoured above her because of the dispensation of which she was deemed worthy. But neither is Elijah, though among the living, an object of worship; nor is John an object of worship, though by his own prayer, or rather, by God’s grace, he made his death wonderful; nor is Thecla, nor any one of the saints, an object of worship. For the old error shall not lord it over us, that we should leave the living One, and worship things made by Him. For they served, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator. For if He willeth

not that the angels be worshipped, HOW MUCH MORE IS HE UNWILLING THAT WORSHIP SHOULD BE PAID TO HER WHO WAS BORN OF ANNA, and was given to Anna from Joachim, given to the father and mother by promise, but, nevertheless, not born differently from the nature of man."

Had Epiphanius been accustomed to celebrate the Virgin Mary, as the authorized services of the Church of Rome celebrate her now, as immaculate in her mother's conception of her, glorifying her as exalted above the choir of angels, as queen of angels, and queen of all saints, could he have written such a sentence as this, in which he argues, that God, who would not suffer the angels to be worshipped, would much less have allowed a Virgin to be worshipped, who was a mortal like ourselves, "and not born out of the ordinary course of nature."

Epiphanius afterwards proceeds thus:—

"God the Word, as a Creator, having authority over it, formed Himself from the Virgin, as from the earth, having clothed Himself with flesh from the holy Virgin; but nevertheless not a virgin to be worshipped, nor that He might make her a deity; not that we might offer in her name; not that after so many generations women should become priestesses. God willed not this to take place in Salome, nor in Mary herself. He suffered her not to administer baptism, nor to bless the disciples; He did not commission her to rule on earth: but only appointed this—that she should be a holy thing, and be deemed worthy of his kingdom. Whence then is the coiling serpent? Whence are his crooked counsels renewed? Let Mary be in honour; but let the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be worshipped. Let no one worship Mary. The mystery [that sacred thing, religious worship] is assigned—I do not say to no woman; but not even to any man—it is assigned to God. Neither do angels receive that ascription of glory. Let these errors, written in the hearts of the

deceived, be wiped away. Let the evil, generated at the tree, be obliterated from our sight. . . . Let no one eat of the error which has arisen by means of holy Mary; for though the tree be beautiful, yet it is not given for food; and though Mary be most beautiful, and holy, and honoured, yet she is not intended to be worshipped. Let Eve, our mother, be honoured, as having been formed by God; but let her not be listened to, lest she persuade her children to eat of the tree and transgress the commandment. And how many more things might be said? for these silly women offer to her the cake, or they take upon themselves to offer it in her behalf. The whole thing is foolish and strange, and is a device and deceit of the devil. But not to extend my discourse further, what I have already said will suffice—Let Mary be in honour: let the Lord be worshipped.”

Few probably will conceive it possible that any primitive writer, maintaining the present doctrines of the Church of Rome, or knowing those to be the doctrines held and acted upon by his contemporaries through the Christian world, could have written the sentiments here quoted. It is not the case of merely negative testimony; it is not only the absence of any intimation as to the writer's belief in the lawfulness and duty of seeking the Virgin's protection by invoking her aid, or as to his knowledge of such invocation being practised around him. It is the case of a Christian Bishop reprobating a practice which had then lately sprung up in some distant portion of Christendom, of WORSHIPPING the Virgin—and who does this without making any exception of invoking her aid, or of asking her to intercede. He does not remonstrate with those innovators for departing from any established mode of addressing her; or for not being content with that worship of her, which they

found already prevalent: and yet this is surely what he would have done, had any mode of worshipping her then been prevalent in the Christian Church. He speaks peremptorily, and universally without exception, or reserve; and he repeats the same naked command again and again—"Let no one worship Mary."

It has been said by writers of the Church of Rome that Epiphanius does not reprove his misguided contemporaries for offering prayers to the Virgin; but for offering her cakes as a sort of sacrifice; and consequently that his reproof does not reach the point at issue, unless the Roman Church offers the sacrifice of the Mass in honour of her. But this is no answer. It is impossible to conceive that had Epiphanius been aware that prayers were offered to the Virgin, and the mercy of God sought through her intercession in the Christian Churches, he would in so unqualified a manner have denounced all worship of the Virgin. He says not, "Do not offer sacrifice to Mary," but "Let no man worship Mary." The offering of a sacrifice was among the heathen, and under the law of Moses one part of religious worship; but so was the offering of prayer and praise equally a part; and Epiphanius taking occasion from the one part more immediately brought under his notice, condemns alike all worship of Mary without any limitation or exception. This is in itself evident; but the case becomes still more clear, and the argument is strongly confirmed by a brief reflection on the original Greek words used by Epiphanius.

The verbs employed by him in these passages, "Let no one worship Mary," "Let the Lord be worshipped," are precisely the same which St. John employs in the Revelation, when referring to a worship in which sacrifice could have no part, "I

¹ Τὴν Μαρὶαμ μηδεὶς προσκυνεῖτω. Ὁ Κύριος προσκυνεῖσθω.

fell down to worship before the feet of the angel. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not; worship God²." It is moreover a fact worthy of notice, that while Epiphanius himself, in his own genuine works, says, "Let no one worship Mary," and "The angels do not receive this honour," the writer of the spurious work ascribed to him, which we have already mentioned, uses the selfsame Greek word when he represents the angels as **WORSHIPPING** the Virgin. We may also observe, that in the spurious work to which we must hereafter refer, ascribed to Ephraim Syrus, and quoted in the present day as his in justification of the Roman errors, the same word is used to the very letter, when the writer addresses the Virgin in the language of adoration, "We bless thee, O Bride of God, and with fear we **WORSHIP** thee³." The fact is, had Epiphanius sought for the most general and comprehensive word for the express purpose of excluding the Virgin Mary from any kind of religious worship whatever—the falling down before her, praying to her, invoking her succour, singing hymns to her honour—he could probably not have selected any word more comprehensive than the word he has employed.

But Epiphanius says, "Let Mary be had in honour." To which every true son of the Church of England will respond, Amen. We discard as fully as Epiphanius could do, all unworthy and disparaging sentiments towards the holy Virgin-Mother of our Lord. But in disowning those who speak irreverently of her, we are careful (as Epiphanius enjoins us to be) not to be driven to the opposite extreme, nor to honour her above the measure due to her. We honour her memory, and we honour all the holy saints of God. Epiphanius bids us honour Mary; but so he bids us, using the same word, honour Eve,

² Ἐπίσυν προσκυνῆσαι. Τῷ Θεῷ προσκύνησον.

³ Προσκυνούμεν.

the mother of us all. We honour the Virgin, but we cannot worship her.

It is too obvious to require more than a few words, and yet it may be safe to observe, that Epiphanius must have entertained on various points besides the invocation of Mary, notions very different from those which are professed by members of the Church of Rome now, and countenanced by the Roman Ritual.

Epiphanius could not have held the immaculate conception of the Virgin in her mother's womb (to celebrate which the Roman Church has instituted a festival), or he could not have asserted, as he has asserted again and again, that "her birth was in the ordinary course of nature"—"not in any way different from other mortals."

Epiphanius could have known nothing of the ASSUMPTION of the Virgin, now celebrated as the chief and crown of the festivals in the Church of Rome; or he would not have told us that since Scripture was silent on the subject of her death, he would not express his opinion whether she died the common death of men, or suffered martyrdom, or was allowed to remain alive on earth⁴.

Of her merits as influencing our spiritual condition; of her intercession; of her present interest (as our advocate) with God; of any prayers, even for aid by her prayers, being offered by the Church, or by the faithful in private—of all this Epiphanius says not a word. From first to last his evidence is all pointedly and irrefutably against the invocation of the Virgin Mary. Epiphanius testifies that the present worship of the blessed Virgin in the Church of Rome had neither place nor name among primitive Christian worshippers.

⁴ P. 1043.

Basil; Gregory of Nazianzum; Ephraim, the Syrian; Gregory of Nyssa.

Our attention is next called to the testimony of four contemporaries, who, although perhaps not personally known each to the other three, yet were united together some indeed, by the ties of blood or of friendship, and all by the bond of faith, hope, and charity. Basil was the brother of Gregory of Nyssa, the companion and friend of Gregory of Nazianzum, and the spiritual father in Christ, by the imposition of whose hands Ephraim the Syrian is said to have received the holy order of Deacon. The testimony of each of these must be examined separately; and though we cannot regard them all as of equal magnitude and brightness, yet will each star of this constellation be found to throw much light on our path, while the combined light of them all united seems to bring the object of our inquiry clearly and distinctly before our mind, and to leave no room at all for doubt (so far as our present investigation is concerned) with regard to the state of religious worship at the close of the fourth century.

St. Basil, A.D. 370⁵.

This Christian father and bishop, who acquired the name of the Great, in distinction from the multitude of bishops and pastors of the same name who succeeded him, is often appealed to under the honoured title of the Great Teacher of Truth. He was born at Cæsarea, probably about A.D. 328, and was there ordained deacon and priest: but in consequence of an unhappy misunderstanding between him and the bishop of that city, he withdrew, at the age of thirty, into the deserts of Pontus, where he passed his time chiefly in religious solitude, which however

⁵ Paris, 1721 and 1839.

was relieved by the friendly converse of Gregory of Nazianzum. Happily, Basil was reconciled to the Bishop of Cæsarea, on whose death, about A.D. 370, he succeeded to that see. There he was permitted to feed the flock of Christ for about nine or ten years, and then he died in peace.

Although the negative evidence of Basil against the existence in the Christian Church, at his time, of any thing approaching the religious worship of the Virgin, is interwoven with all his remains, yet not more than two or three passages call for any especial examination. Basil, with all true and sound believers, held (to use the words of the Church of England) that "the Son, the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance;" that He "was born of a pure virgin." And thus, in his comments on the record of the Creation⁶, refuting those who urged the impossibility of a virgin being a mother, he affirms that the Creator had provided, by the operations of nature, unnumbered preparatory acts for the reception of the mystery of the Incarnation. The accuracy of Basil, on subjects of natural history, does not affect our inquiry. In that passage, he maintains that, in the economy of Grace, the Son of God was born of Mary, a virgin; but of her he says no more.

But the evidence of Basil is far from being merely negative. Different passages bear testimony to the fact, that he did not entertain towards the Virgin any such sentiments as are now professed by the Church of Rome; that he offered her no worship (let it be called *dulia* or *hyperdulia*); that⁷ he regarded her as

⁶ Hex. Hom. viii. s. 6. Ed. 1721, vol. i. p. 76. Ed. 1839, p. 107.

⁷ We shall find many of the ancient Fathers putting forth similar sentiments with regard to the Virgin, which, as they appear to have no foundation in Scripture, we may well leave as we find them. The citation of them in evidence of a primitive writer's sentiments implies no approval or admission of them as our own.¹

one whose faith was tried and was shaken, and who needed the renewal of the Holy Ghost, after her trust in God's providence had for a while been interrupted; in a word, that he neither looked to her as an intercessor and mediator, nor believed in her Assumption; nor placed any hope in her good offices in heaven, to be secured on the part of mankind, by prayer addressed either to herself or to God.

Optimus, a bishop, had laid before Basil some of his difficulties in the interpretation of Scripture. Among other matters, he requested his assistance towards the right understanding of the address made by Simeon to Mary, on Christ's presentation in the Temple. Basil, complying with his request, recommends him to interpret the words "And he shall be for a sign that shall be spoken against," as prophetic of those lamentable disputes which had arisen concerning Christ's incarnation; "some maintaining that he had an earthly body, others that it was a heavenly body; some that it pre-existed from all eternity, others that it had its origin from Mary." And then, in explanation of the expression, "A sword shall pass through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed," he thus proceeds:—

"The sword is the word that trieth, that judgeth the thoughts, and separateth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow¹. As therefore every soul was subject to some doubt at the time of the Passion (according to the voice of the Lord, 'All shall be offended because of me,') Simeon prophesied concerning Mary also herself, that standing by the cross and seeing what was being done, and hearing those words, notwithstanding the testimony of Gabriel, notwithstanding the ineffable knowledge of the Divine conception, notwithstanding the great display of miracles; yet after all, saith he, there shall arise a certain wavering even in thy own soul. For

¹ Vol. iii. Epist. 260, p. 400. Ed. 1839, vol. iii. p. 579.

it behoved the Lord to taste death for every man, and by making a propitiation for the world, to save all men by his blood; consequently even thee also thyself, who hast been instructed from above in the things of the Lord, some doubt shall affect. This is the sword."

Basil then proceeds to explain the remaining clause in Simeon's address, thus—"That the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed." He intimates, that after the offence taken at the cross of Christ, both by the disciples and Mary, some remedy should speedily come from the Lord, confirming their hearts in their faith on Him. Thus we know that Peter, after having been offended, held the faith of Christ more steadfastly. The weakness and frailty of human nature were proved, in order that the power of God might be shown."

It is impossible to believe that one who entertained these sentiments could, at the same time, have held the doctrines concerning the Virgin Mary which the Church of Rome teaches her members to hold. We do not wonder at the expression used by the Benedictine Editor, both in a marginal note and in the index, "This of Basil is not quite a fair opinion concerning the holy mother of God." "Basil, not very decorously (*minus belle*), thinks that Mary herself wavered at the time of the Passion." Whence Basil derived his view, or how far his is the true interpretation of the passage, has nothing to do with the object of our present inquiry. Basil is here proved to have held sentiments altogether incompatible with the present belief and practice of the Roman Church concerning the Virgin Mary.

Like the works of almost every ancient writer, the volumes which contain the genuine productions of Basil, remind us of the recklessness with which the errors of subsequent ages were ascribed to the primitive teachers of our holy faith.

But when we bear in mind that not less than forty,

probably more, of the same name with Basil, though of very inferior note, followed him, we can scarcely wonder at so many spurious works being ascribed to him. By such forgeries the authority of these early Fathers has been too long forced to countenance the errors which crept into the faith and worship of the Church, long after those holy men had fallen asleep in Christ; errors as much opposed to their genuine sentiments, as they are to the doctrine of the Church of England now. By no labours, perhaps, can the learning and ability of the lovers of truth, and the faithful sons of the Church of Christ, promote the cause of primitive worship more effectually than by clearing the field of Christian antiquity of those noxious weeds, which the enemy of truth has from age to age sown so artfully; choking in many cases the genuine and good seed, in others mingling some subtle poison with the wholesome fruits of Gospel truth. Much has been already done; but we shall be more and more convinced, as our inquiry proceeds, that much more yet remains to be done.

Before we leave this venerable teacher in Christ's school, it may be well for us to recall some few of Basil's genuine sentiments on the efficacy and comfort of prayer, the duty and blessing of habitually studying the holy Scriptures, and the consolations administered by real Christianity to those who are in sorrow and affliction. Several passages bear, though indirectly yet convincingly, on the immediate subject of our inquiry; the absence throughout of all allusion to the Virgin Mary (whose protection at the awful hour of death and from the face of their enemy, the Roman Church now bids her children to supplicate) being most striking and satisfactory.

It is refreshing to hear this holy man in his retirement speaking, like a voice from the wilderness, of the inestimable value of holy Scripture as the guide of our life, supplying us with rules of conduct, and proposing the bright example of good men, as living

models for a child of God to imitate. No less delightful is it to hear him speak of prayer. "Prayer," he says, "should ever attend our study of holy Scripture: our mind is more vigorous then, more renovated with the strength of youth, and is under a stronger influence of the love of God." The best prayer he considers to be that which brings the idea of God more vividly before the mind; to have God ever present in our thoughts and hearts, realizes the indwelling of God in us. "Thus we become a temple of God, when the tenor of our thoughts, and our remembrance of Him are not cut asunder by earthly cares, nor the mind disturbed by passions unawares assailing us. Flying from all these, the man who loves God withdraws himself to God, banishing all evil desires which would tempt him to what is unholy, and persevering in those pursuits which lead to excellence".

His letter of condolence to Nectarius⁹ on the death of that friend's only son is most beautiful in itself, and opens to us Basil's views as to the fountain and living spring of all consolation to a Christian. Having expressed his own deep affliction, caused by the melancholy loss sustained by his friend, he recalls Nectarius to a consideration of the tenure of human life, and the many instances which they had known of similar calamities. He then adds—

"Above all, it is God's command, that because of the hope of the resurrection we sorrow not for those that have fallen asleep. Moreover with the great Judge of our struggles crowns of great glory are reserved as the rewards of great patience. Wherefore I call on you, as a generous combatant, not to sink beneath the weight of your sorrows, nor suffer your soul to be swallowed up by it: persuaded of

⁹ Epist. ii. vol. iii. pp. 72, 73. Ed. 1839, vol. iii. p. 92.

¹⁰ Epist. v. p. 77. Ed. 1839, p. 106.

this, that though the reasons of God's dispensations are hidden from us, yet whatever is apportioned to us by Him, who is wise and who loveth us, should be borne, however painful it may be. For He knows how to assign what is for the real good of each; and why He appoints to different persons unequal periods of life. Though not comprehended by man, there is a cause why some are taken away sooner hence, and others are left to linger on in this life of pain. So that in all things we should adore his loving-kindness, and without repining remember the famous exclamation which the great combatant Job uttered, when he saw his ten children round one table in one moment destroyed. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it pleased the Lord, so it was!' Let us make that admirable sentiment our own. By the just Judge an equal reward is reserved for those who acquit themselves equally. We have not been deprived of our boy; we have only returned him to HIM who lent him. His life is not extinct, but is changed for the better. The earth does not cover our beloved one, but heaven hath received him. Let us only wait a little while, and we shall again be with him whose loss we feel. The time of our separation will not be long. In this life we are all hastening on the road to the same inn; in which one is already lodged, another is coming in after him, a third hastening: one end will receive us all. He has finished his journey first; but we are all on the same journey; and the same inn awaits us all. Only may we resemble him in purity, that we may obtain the same rest with the children of Christ."

At the close of the next letter, which is also consolatory, St. Basil says,—

"In these cases, argument is not enough for consolation. We have need also of prayer. I pray the Lord Himself that HE, touching your heart by his ineffable power, will by good thoughts enkindle

light in your soul, that you may have the well-spring of comfort in your own home¹."

St. Gregory of Nazianzum, A.D. 380².

Gregory, called "Theologus," from his profound erudition in divine knowledge, and "of Nazianzum," from a city in Cappadocia, was the friend of Basil, and tutor of Jerome³. He was trained, we are told, in the most celebrated schools of rhetoric, at Athens and Alexandria as well as in other cities. For some years he superintended the Church of Nazianzum as the coadjutor or suffragan of his father, who was at that time by age and infirmities disabled from discharging the episcopal functions. He was afterwards called to preside over the metropolitan Church of Constantinople, from which he retired by a voluntary resignation of that see; and having passed the ten remaining years of his life in retirement, he died about the year 391, at the age of probably not less than ninety years.

This Gregory is referred to by the Roman Catholic historian of the Council of Trent⁴, as one of those who "by addressing saints in public harangues laid the foundation of the modern practice of praying to them, though such addresses ought to be regarded as figures of rhetoric rather than religious invocations." Gregory's works contain many panegyrics delivered on the anniversaries, or at the tombs of celebrated Christians (some of them his contemporaries), at the close of which he apostrophizes the martyr, apologizing for his own defects, begging him to accept his exertions however unworthy of the merits he has been celebrating, and to look favourably on the com-

¹ P. 79. Ed. 1839, p. 112.

² Paris, vol. i. 1778; vol. ii. 1840.

³ See Fabricius, vol. ix. p. 383.

⁴ Histoire du Concile de Trent, 1751.

pany assembled in honour of him. But in the same harangues we find him apostrophizing things which never had ears to hear, or a mind to understand—It is difficult to believe how any one seeking, not what by ingenuity might be forced to countenance a system, but what is in reality evidence of the faith and practice of the first Christians, could acquiesce with satisfaction in such apostrophes.

If weighed in the balance of truth, these apostrophes carry with them no greater proof that the Christian orator invoked the saint in an act of religious worship, than the words of Tacitus, in apostrophizing Agricola, bear that he sought the aid of his departed friend. There is, however, this important difference, that Gregory entertained no doubts as to the immortality of the soul; whereas the words of the Roman historian imply that with him the existence of a future state was still an unsettled question. In more recent instances, also, we find misgivings and doubts as to the power of the departed to hear their surviving friends when addressing them. Such for example is the apostrophe made by Frederic II., King of Prussia, in his panegyric of Prince Henry. And after doubts of this sort once expressed, few probably would see any proof of the belief or practice of the heathen biographer or the modern king, were they to make many other similar apostrophes without the expression of such doubt.

But precisely the same expression of uncertainty and doubt and misgiving occurs (and that not once only) in these addresses of Gregory of Nazianzum. It may put the illustration in a clearer light, if we lay the instances we have mentioned side by side with Gregory's. There is a remarkable correspondence in many of the circumstances of the three cases: Tacitus addresses his wife's father as a beloved parent; Frederic addresses his nephew; Gregory addresses his own sister—

TACITUS.

Agricola! If there be a place for the spirits of the pious, ^{it} as philosophers think, great souls perish not with their bodies, rest thou in peace: and CALL THOU us thy family, from weak repinings and feminine wailings to a contemplation of thy virtues, which it is not lawful for us to mourn or wail for; rather let us adorn thee with our admiration, with temporal honours, and if nature so permit, by resembling thee.

FREDERIC.

Prince! You who knew how dear you were to me—how precious was your person to me: if the voice of the living can make itself heard by the dead, listen to a voice which was not unknown to you. SUFFER this frail monument, the only one, alas! that I can erect to your memory to be raised to you¹.

GREGORY.

Mayest thou enjoy all these, of which when on earth thou receivedst a few droppings from thy genuine disposition towards them. But if ^{then} thou canst take any interest in our affairs, and this boon is granted by God to pious souls, to have a sense of such things, receive our address instead of many funeral obsequies, and in preference to many².

The whole of this passage of Gregory's address deserves a place here. It is full of Christian faith and love. It is observable that in his reference to the joys of heaven which he believed that his sister already possessed, though he mentions the glory of angels and of other beings and of God, yet there is no allusion to the Virgin Mary.

"Better, I well know, and far more to be prized, are the things thou hast now, than what are seen here; the sound of those who keep holyday, the choir of angels, the vision both of other beings, and also of the Trinity most high; the more pure and perfect illumination of glory no longer withdrawing itself from a mind in bondage, and dissipated by the passions, but entirely contemplated, and held by the whole mind, and shining upon our souls with the full light of the Godhead—all these mayest thou enjoy, of which, &c."

Another striking instance of the same doubt and uncertainty, not as to the happiness of true Christians in another world, but as to their power to hear the addresses made to them by any here below, occurs in Gregory's first invective against Julian³. Having

¹ For both these references, see Taciti Op. Brotier, vol. iv. p. 131.

² Greg. Naz. vol. i. p. 232.

³ Vol. i. p. 78.

called all upon earth to hear him, he adds, "Hear, O heaven, and give hear, O earth. And do thou hear, O soul of the great Constantius, IF THERE BE ANY PERCEPTION, and all ye souls of the kings before him who loved Christ:" the note in the Benedictine edition thus interpreting and illustrating these words of Gregory:—"If the dead are sensible of any thing. Thus Isocrates, in the same words but somewhat more fully: 'If there is any perception of what is going on here.'"

After the expression of these doubts, we do not see how any sound argument can be based upon such addresses to the souls of the departed made by Gregory. But, to confine ourselves more particularly to the immediate subject of our inquiry, we do not find any evidence borne by Gregory to the invocation of the Virgin; on the contrary, in his genuine works, he is a clear and strong witness against it.

Here, however, a painful duty is forced on any one who is resolved to make a sacrifice of any thing rather than of the truth:—Gregory of Nazianzum is in the present day confidently cited as one who himself prayed directly and unequivocally to the Virgin Mary. The appeal is thus made to his authority by Dr. N. Wiseman, Roman Catholic Bishop of Melipotamus* :—

"But I must not omit another passage of the same Father, neither will I venture to abridge it. It is the conclusion of his dramatic composition entitled, 'Christ Suffering.' Whatever may be put to the account of poetical feeling and expression, enough will remain to satisfy us of his belief. But after all, there is poetry in all sincere prayer; every office of Catholic devotion, public or private, is essentially poetical: and if it was lawful for St. Gregory to address the blessed Virgin as follows under any circumstances, it cannot be idolatrous in us. 'Moreover kindly ad-

* Remarks on a Letter from the Rev. W. Palmer, by N. Wiseman, D.D., Bishop of Melipotamus. London, 1841, p. 28.

mit thy Mother, O Word, as an intercessor, and those to whom thou hast granted the grace to loose. August, venerable, all-blessed Virgin! Than inhabitest the heavenly mansions of the blessed, freed from the incumbrance of mortality, clad in the garment of incorruption, known ever-immortal as a Deity. Be kind from above to my addresses. Yea, yea, most glorious maiden, receive my words; for this distinction belongs to thee alone of mortals, as the mother of the Word, although beyond comprehension! On which relying, I address thee, and to adorn thee bear a garland woven from the purest meads, O Lady; for that many favours thou vouchsafing hast ever freed me from various calamities of enemies visible, but more invisible. When I shall reach the end of my life, as I have entreated, may I ever have thee as protector of the riches of my entire life; and as a most acceptable intercessor with thy Son, together with his well-pleasing servants. Allow me not to be delivered up to torments, and to be the sport of the cruel despoiler of men. Stand by me and save me from the fire and darkness, by the faith which justifieth, and by thy favour; for in thee was seen the grace of God to us. Therefore, I weave for thee a grateful hymn, Virgin Mother, fair and supreme above all other virgins, sublime above all heavenly orders of beings! Mistress! Queen of all things! Delight of our race! be thou ever kind to it, and to me in every place salvation.'

"Here," observes Dr. Wiseman, "is the blessed Virgin directly prayed to, considered a protector, a defender against enemies. In short, in this one address, St. Gregory sums up all that is contained in the passage considered by Mr. Palmer so objectionable in the mouths of modern Catholics."

To this alleged testimony of the great Theologian, only one answer can be given; but of the certainty of that answer we can entertain no question. Gregory of Nazianzum never wrote one of those words. The

tragedy after the manner of Euripides was not written by Gregory, nor in his age. The greatest difficulty in the case is, how to account for such a citation being made in the present day, without any allusion to the authorities, by which the work is pronounced not to be Gregory's. Had members of the reformed Church alone, or recently, rejected that work, (however strong and sound their reasons might have seemed to us,) we should not have been surprised at our Roman Catholic contemporaries still quoting this tragedy as Gregory's; but here we need cite no other evidence than the united testimonies of a large body of the best Roman Catholic critics⁹, to prove that the work is unquestionably spurious; or rather we need only refer to the Roman Catholic editor, M. Caillau, Paris, 1840, who establishes its spuriousness beyond controversy.

Another passage has been frequently quoted, in proof that Gregory of Nazianzum recognized prayer to the Virgin as an ordinary practice, a century before his time. The passage occurs in an oration, said to have been delivered by this Gregory in praise of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage. The testimony has been highly valued; and with the view of retaining it among Gregory's works, great pains have been taken to reconcile the confusion and inconsistencies which abound throughout the work in which it is found. Indeed, the Benedictine editors confess "that no where in the fourth century is the protection and assistance of the blessed Virgin so clearly and so explicitly commended as in this oration¹." To state the reasons which

⁹ In pronouncing that the passage now quoted as genuine by Dr. Wiseman, is falsely assigned to Gregory, these agree with one voice: Tillemont, Dupin, Baillet Jugement des Savants, Baronius, Rivet, Vossius, Bellarmin, Labbe, Ceillier. Fabricius has been lately quoted as acknowledging the genuineness of the work; but incorrectly. He only rejects the notion, of its having been written by Apollinaris: and in the same page he tells us, that Lipsius and Vossius doubted, and that Triller and Valcken undertook to demonstrate that it was spurious. See Greg. Theolog. Paris, 1840. Edit. M. Caillau, Priest. See also Romish Worship of the Virgin, p. 375.

¹ Vol. i. p. 437.

compel us to regard the oration as altogether spurious, and the work of a writer far inferior to Gregory of Nazianzum in ecclesiastical knowledge, we trust will not be thought uninteresting or out of place.

But if, for argument's sake, the oration were admitted as genuine, its evidence amounts to very little; and could not counterbalance the weight of evidence to be put in the other scale. Still, whoever was the author, the story detailed is this: A young lady of great beauty was in imminent danger, in consequence of the violent emotions which her charms had excited in Cyprian, who, to bring her into his toils, and secure her to himself, had recourse to the arts of magic, in which he was versed, and to the assistance of one of those evil spirits whom magicians bribed by acts of homage. "Justina, (to use the speaker's own words,) DISCARDING ALL OTHERS, FLIES FOR REFUGE TO GOD, who had protected Susanna and Thecla, and she takes her own bridegroom for her champion against hateful lusts. And who was this? Christ, who rebukes the winds, and supports the sinking, and consigns a legion of devils to the deep, and rescues from the den the just man exposed as food for lions, and by the outstretching of his arms conquers the wild beasts, and rescues the fugitive prophet swallowed up by the whale, even in its belly preserving his faith, and saves the Assyrian youths in the fire, quenching the flame by his angel, and adding a fourth to the three. Meditating on these and more instances than these, (*and beseeching the Virgin Mary to assist a virgin in peril,*) she throws before her the charm of fasting and mortification, at the same time marring her beauty as treacherous, that she might withdraw the fuel of the flame, and expend the heat of passion, and also making God propitious by her faith and her humility; for God is served by nothing so much as by affliction; and loving-kindness is given in return for tears."

Now, if this statement really came from Gregory

of Nazianzum, to what does it amount? It shows that he reported without a word of approbation or dissatisfaction, the circumstance of a female being in peril having, a century before his time, called upon the Virgin to protect her from the wanton attacks of one who was then a child of Satan, exercising for her ruin his arts as a magician, but whom she converted to Christianity, and who afterwards became Bishop of Carthage, and a martyred saint. The sentence is parenthetical, and no reference is made to the Virgin in what precedes or follows it; on the contrary, the orator expressly states, that Justina, forsaking all other, betook herself only to God. Still were the oration genuine, this parenthesis must be allowed to carry that degree of evidence as to the general practice of the preceding century, which each inquirer after truth may consider it to bear. The arguments, however, against its being admitted as the genuine production of Gregory the Theologian, seem to us conclusive and unanswerable.

In examining this homily with the view of forming a correct judgment as to its genuineness, (its historical accuracy or authenticity is not attempted to be established by any one,) we must throughout have present to our mind the character of the author to whom it is ascribed. Gregory was one of the most learned bishops of the Church; one who, by his extraordinary knowledge of divine things, obtained the surname of the Theologian. He had studied in other famous seats of learning, and especially at Alexandria and Athens; and at both those places, if any where in the world, at that time, the biography of St. Cyprian of Carthage would be a subject of interest, and would be familiarly known and imparted. Could Gregory then be the author of a homily filled with so many gross mistakes and inconsistencies, and so inexplicable a confusion of facts and persons? The alternative is of no slight importance; and the question deserves a patient and full examination. If the genuineness of the oration be maintained, then this

great teacher and theologian is convicted of such gross mistakes as are not only inconsistent with the range of his learning and knowledge, but would disgrace any ordinary person, who had the opportunities with which he was favoured; and if the glaring inconsistencies and ignorance pervading the homily compel us to pronounce against its genuineness, then this testimony to the early prevalence of invocations to the Virgin Mary (which, slight as it is, is acknowledged to be the clearest and most explicit which the fourth century can produce,) must be given up as a thing of nought.

1st. Then, nothing is known as to the time, or place, or occasion of the delivery of this oration. The notice of Nicetas, in the Paris edition of 1611, states that it was spoken to the people of Nazianzum, the day after the festival of St. Cyprian, on the orator's return from the warm baths, at the foot of the precipitous mountain near the town, which he frequented, partly for the comfort of retirement, and partly for the cure of an infirmity under which he laboured. But this idea is rejected by the Roman Catholic editors in the Paris edition of 1778, because the orator addresses his audience as persons with whom he had been only a short time acquainted; and they maintain that the oration must have been delivered at Constantinople, A.D. 379.

2ndly. The Cyprian, in praise of whom the orator, whoever he was, delivered this panegyric, and of whose licentiousness and vice, and magical arts, and violence towards Justina he was speaking, was Saint Cyprian, the renowned Bishop of Carthage; whereas all the editors and critics with one voice pronounce such a stigma upon his character to be a calumny which must not, for a moment, be attached to that holy man's name. Thus it is that Dr. Wiseman speaks of "the machinations of the magician Cyprian," without making any allusion to the Saint of Carthage, whose memory we hold in reverence. But, whoever was the orator, that the subject of his panegyric was St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, admits of no

doubt, and ought not thus to be disguised. The words of the orator, variously, and again and again repeated, fix the identity of the individual beyond question. Thus in one passage he says, "This Cyprian, my friends, (that those of you who know it may be more pleased with the remembrance, and those who know it not, may learn the fairest of all our histories, and the common glory of Christians,) is that man, the great name formerly of the Carthaginians, but now of the whole world." "He not only presided over the Church of the Carthaginians, or of Africa, (from him and on account of him celebrated to the present day,) but also the whole west, and almost the very east, and the south, and the north, wherever fame reached. Thus Cyprian became ours."

Baronius², the great Roman Catholic authority, affirms that all this was a mistake in the orator; that the anecdote must have related to another Cyprian; and that as for St. Cyprian of Carthage, the story charging him with having used magical arts is AN EXPLODED FABLE.

Can we conceive Gregory the Theologian, the most learned man of his time, who had himself studied in Alexandria and Athens, to have fallen into such gross errors, and to have been the propagator of such a fable, when we know that the history of St. Cyprian's martyrdom (which we have at the present day) written by Pontius, his own deacon, was then spread through Christendom?

3rdly. The orator, in a manner³, totally at variance with what Gregory's works inform us of his own sentiments, states, that "the very ashes of Cyprian, if used in faith, dislodged devils, expelled diseases, foretold things to come; as they know who have made the trial, and have delivered the account down to us, and will deliver it for times to come!"

² Baronius, Martyr. 26 Sept. p. 376, Paris, 1607; and Annal. Eccles. vol. ii. p. 564. Anno Christi 250.

³ P. 440.

4thly. The orator ⁴ relates that the body of Cyprian, having been hidden by a pious woman, was for a long time concealed, and was brought to light by a revelation made to another woman: whereas the Acts of the Proconsulate state, that the body of Cyprian of Carthage, after he was beheaded, was carried at night by torchlight to the burying-place of Macrobius on the Massalian way, near the fishponds, with many prayers and exultations ⁵.

5thly. The orator asserts that the persecution by which the Cyprian of whom he speaks was first banished and then beheaded, took place under Decius, who was bent on destroying so eminent a Christian; whereas, Cyprian of Carthage, though banished in the Decian persecution, yet returned from exile, and after some years of labour in his episcopal office, suffered martyrdom about A.D. 259, at the close of Valerian's reign. There is much difficulty in fixing these dates with minute exactness; but allowing for all the varieties of reckoning, the inconsistencies and anachronisms in this oration remain unaffected.

6thly. While with one voice it is denied that the Cyprian, to whose memory the stain of attempting Justina's seduction attached could be the Bishop of Carthage, many of the circumstances specified by the orator, as belonging to the subject of his eulogy, correspond precisely with the acknowledged facts of that Saint Cyprian's life. Cyprian's biographer was Pontius his own deacon, who witnessed his martyrdom; and what he tells us of the birth, station, learning, wealth, liberality, and the death of his master, coincides exactly with the descriptions in this panegyric. The circumstances, too, beautifully told by the orator of his Cyprian having written many letters to encourage and comfort his people, both the memoir of Pontus and Cyprian's letters still extant prove to have belonged to the Bishop of Carthage. Whereas,

⁴ P. 448.

⁵ Cyprian, Paris, 1726, cxlvii.

on the other hand, the stories detailed by the orator of his Cyprian practising arts of magic, and summoning the devil to his aid in the work of seduction, and then destroying his books, and then being converted by Justina (the very name of her who was the fellow-martyr of Cyprian of Nicomedia) after he had attempted to ruin her, are all irreconcilable with the facts of the life of St. Cyprian of Carthage, who was himself a married man before his conversion; who was converted in his fiftieth year, by his friend Cæcilius the presbyter, and who, instead of disgracing himself by magical and diabolical arts, was engaged in the pursuits of literature, and practised every moral virtue. The orator distinctly announces that the person of whom he spoke was the renowned Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, the glory of the Christian Church: the question again forces itself upon us, "Could Gregory the Theologian have been that orator?"

7thly. To avoid the scandal of leaving such fabulous imputations on the character of the great St. Cyprian, commentators suggest that not he, but Cyprian of Nicomedia, was the person meant by the orator. But that suggestion only involves the oration in other inconsistencies, besides contradicting the express declaration of the orator himself. The orator says his Cyprian was beheaded under Decius, who died about the year 251, whereas no account fixes the martyrdom of Cyprian of Nicomedia at an earlier date than the reign of Diocletian and Maximinian, which did not commence till after the lapse of thirty years from the death of Decius.

8thly. Supposing the orator to mean Cyprian of Nicomedia, then he is altogether mistaken as to the kind of death suffered by the martyr; he says it was by the sword severing the head from the body (the real mode of the martyrdom of Cyprian of Carthage), whereas Cyprian of Nicomedia, together with his fellow-martyr, Justina, was burnt on an instrument of torture, called the gridiron, or frying-pan.

9thly. If Cyprian of Nicomedia be the subject of the orator's panegyric, then the story of the body having been hidden by one woman, and afterward supernaturally shown to another, is no less inapplicable to him, than to Cyprian of Carthage. For we are expressly told, that the corpse of the martyr of Nicomedia was exposed to be devoured by wild beasts, but that some Christian soldiers carried it away by night, and bore it to Rome, whence it was removed to Constantinople, and buried in the basilica, near the baptistry.

Lastly. The passage in which the orator tells us that one woman concealed and another discovered the remains of Cyprian, contains, as it now stands, a most extraordinary sentence, by no means to be overlooked in our present inquiry as to the author of this oration, —“That the women might also be purified; as THOSE WOMEN, who both before gave birth to Christ, and told his disciples after his resurrection from the dead; so now also the one woman showing, the other giving up [the body of Cyprian as] a common benefit.”

With such inconsistencies, and contradictions, and inextricable confusion before us, it is impossible for us to regard this panegyric as the production of Gregory of Nazianzum. We cannot conceive that a bishop so deeply imbued with learning in all its branches, sacred and secular, doctrinal and historical, could have delivered an oration, which professes, in the plainest language and by a variety of expressions, to be a panegyric of that Cyprian who was the renowned prelate of Carthage, the glory of Africa and the world, and yet which is pervaded with a tissue of inconsistencies and contradictions, historical and biographical, from its first to its last page.

The insulated parenthesis, however, in this oration, which we have above quoted, is confessed by Roman Catholics to be, of all, the most clear and explicit testimony of the invocation of the Virgin, which the fourth century supplies!

But here a question naturally forces itself upon the

mind: If no satisfaction can be afforded as to the authenticity and genuineness of this oration, will not the undisputed works of Gregory of Nazianzum enable us to infer what were his own sentiments as to the invocation of the Virgin Mary? Will not his compositions, either in prose or in verse, satisfactorily inform us whether he addressed the Virgin in prayer himself, or was aware that the Christian Church, as a body, and by its members, so addressed her?

Undoubtedly Gregory has left quite enough upon record, in his own undisputed works, to enable any one to answer these questions for himself. The result of a diligent inquiry is, that there is no intimation whatever of Gregory's having looked to the Virgin Mary for any help or aid, or ever having invoked her himself; nor does he ever allude to her worship by others, as a practice with which he was acquainted.

But the nature and circumstances of Gregory's works take his testimony out of the common class of negative evidence, and invest it with a force of no ordinary cogency. The course of his argument often led him to speak of the union in Christ of the divine and human nature, and consequently of the birth of Christ. On all these occasions he speaks of the Virgin Mary as a being of untainted purity in body and mind, often using expressions which, though not in themselves involving any unsound doctrine, yet are liable to misinterpretation, and which perhaps made the descent to errors in a subsequent age more easy; but none of which imply any trust in her mediation, or any invocation of her aid⁶.

Gregory has left behind him a large number of poems on religious and moral subjects, of unequal merit as compositions, still breathing throughout the spirit of an enlightened and pious Christian. Of these poems, thirty, at least, are hymns of prayer and thanksgiving. Yet, among them, it is in vain to search for

⁶ See vol. i. pp. 728. 852; vol. ii. p. 85.

any invocation to the Virgin, or any address to her, or any recognition of her influence as intercessor, or of any power given to her as the dispenser of blessings or mercies. In the variety of his petitions, we find him asking for all things needful, both for the soul and body. It is interesting and edifying to compare these prayers, not only with the less solemnly authorized hymns of prayer and praise now offered in Roman Catholic churches, but even with the appointed services in the Liturgy of Rome. He prays for guidance in his journey, for protection from his enemies, for a pure heart and life, for help and acceptance in the hour of death; but we find no "Mary, mother of grace, protect us from our enemies, make our lives pure, prepare for us a safe journey, receive us in the hour of death." Every address is made to God his Saviour; no mention occurs of the Virgin's name, nor any allusion to her advocacy. From first to last, God is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega of Gregory's worship and invocation.

There are, however, both in his prose compositions and in his poems, references to the Virgin; and the testimony they bear is clear and satisfactory.

In his oration on the Nativity, he uses this strong expression, "Christ is born of a virgin: ye women, live as virgins, that ye may be mothers of Christ."

In a short poem, speaking of his own mother, he says, "Nonna praying at this table was taken away, and now shines (with Susannah, Mary, and the Annas,) a support of women."

In one verse, he applies to the Virgin an epithet which the translator renders, "like to God," but which the commentator properly directs us to interpret "pious."

In another poem written in honour of the virgin state, as an example of the offspring surpassing its parent in excellence, he says:—

"And Christ is indeed of Mary, but far more excellent NOT ONLY THAN MARY, and those who are

clothed with flesh, but also than all the intellects which the spacious heaven inveils."

These are not the addresses and sentiments of one who invoked the Virgin, or acknowledged her (as the spurious tragedy does) to be "supreme above all heavenly orders of beings."

We will only make one more reference. In his sermon on the Nativity, he calls upon the Christian to honour Bethlehem and the manger; to hasten with the star; and offer with the magi; and worship with the shepherds; and sing with the angels and archangels. "Let there be," says the preacher, "one united celebration made by the powers of heaven and earth; for I am persuaded that they join in this festival." Of Joseph and the Virgin he there says nothing.

THE END.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XIV.

ON THE
WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.

EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AGAINST IT.—*Continued.*



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE present Tracts form part of a series intended to be issued on some of the chief and most prevalent errors of the Church of Rome. The following have already been published :—

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- II. ON PARDONS AND INDULGENCES GRANTED BY THE POPE.
- III. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.
- IV. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- V. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AGAINST IT.
- VI. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT.
- VII. ON THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS AND ANGELS.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- VIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—DOCTRINE AND AUTHORIZED SERVICES OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.
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- XIII. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN MARY.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XIV. ON THE WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XV. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[continued]*.
- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

WHAT IS ROMANISM ?

*Romish Worship of the Virgin.—Evidence of the
Primitive Church against it (continued).*

St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine.

Two of the brightest ornaments of the Christian world next offer themselves for our examination; St. John Chrysostom, the glory of the Greek Church, and St. Augustine, equally the honour of the Latin. According to some accounts, these two luminaries of our holy faith were born into the world in the very same year, A.D. 354, though others place the birth of Chrysostom as early as A.D. 347. Chrysostom was called to his rest when he had not long passed the meridian of man's life as a labourer in Christ's vineyard; whereas, his brother confessor was left to toil successfully in the same field, till he had passed the age after which the Psalmist bids us to expect only labour and sorrow.

St. Chrysostom, A.D. 405¹.

John, surnamed from his eloquence, Chrysostom, or "the golden-mouthed," was born in Antioch, of Cœlo-

¹ Thirteen vols. fol. Paris, 1718.

syria. His father died soon after his birth; and he was not baptized till his twenty-third year. At the age of twenty-seven, he was ordained deacon, and at thirty-two priest. In his forty-fourth year, he succeeded Nectarius, the successor of Gregory of Nazianzum, as Bishop of Constantinople. From this office he was deposed, and he died in exile somewhere about the year 407.

In our endeavours to ascertain the standard of doctrine, the habitual views, and ruling principles and sentiments of this noble Christian writer, the greatest care is necessary in distinguishing between his genuine works, and those productions which must be pronounced spurious. The treatises (as the Benedictine editor assures us) are innumerable which the fraud of booksellers, and the vanity of petty authors, have combined to impose upon the world as Chrysostom's, but which have no pretensions to such a place in literature! Would that a wide and careful research were instituted by men adequate to the task, into the treasures which still remain unexamined, or are mingled with deceitful counterfeits! Next to the blessed Scriptures themselves, no department of theology so powerfully appeals to the Christian world for the united efforts of those to whom primitive truth is dear, as the text of the early writers; nor would any field more abundantly repay the labour bestowed upon it. Applicable as this remark would be in the case of every one of those ancient Fathers any of whose remains have been saved from the wreck of time, it is forced upon us with especial interest in our examination of St. Chrysostom's testimony.

The attempt to support a system, however long propagated, or however highly valued, by counterfeit witnesses, and by evidence which will not bear the sifting of fair and able criticism, (even were it consistent with the principles of Christianity, or of common honesty,) cannot be eventually successful. The Benedictine¹itors have done much toward purifying the volumes

of Chrysostom from the gross impositions with which age after age had loaded them ; but much yet remains to be done. For the immediate-object of our investigation, to keep on the safe side, we shall cite no passage which those editors have not admitted as genuine, nor exclude any which they have not pronounced to be spurious.

The result, then, of a thorough examination of the genuine works of St. Chrysostom is the conviction, that from his first to his last page there is not the faintest intimation that he either addressed the Virgin Mary by invocation, or placed any confidence in her merits and intercession himself, or was at all aware that Christians either individually or as a body in the Church, prayed to her even for her prayers, or prayed to God to hear them, through her intercession. But the testimony of Chrysostom is not merely negative ; on the contrary, it is direct, and clear, and manifold, that he addressed in prayer God alone, and only through his blessed Son ; never invoking the Virgin, nor mentioning her name even in a subordinate sense as intercessor or mediator.

The sentiments of Chrysostom on the necessity, the dignity, and the blessed effects of prayer, are so just, and at the same time so encouraging and uplifting, and so applicable to us all, that before we cite the proofs of these positions, the time will not be misspent which we may devote, by way of preparation, to some few of the passages which convey his views on prayer in general. We shall find him exhorting sincere Christians to approach with humble confidence to the throne of grace, taking with them faith, and repentance, and obedient love ; and seeking then for no foreign aid or recommendation, and looking for no intercessor in heaven but Christ only. In his comment on the fourth Psalm we read these beautiful observations on the efficacy of prayer² :—

² Vol. v. p. 8.

“If I possess justice, some one will say, what need of prayer, for that will guide us right in all things; and He who gives knows what we need? Because prayer is no slight bond of love towards God, accustoming us to habitual intercourse with Him, and leading us to wisdom; for if any one by intercourse with some admirable man gathers much fruit from the intercourse, how much more will he who has continual intercourse with God! But we have not an adequate sense of the value of prayer, since we do not apply to it with thoughtful care, nor employ it agreeably to the law of God.

“If we would approach with becoming carefulness, and as persons about to converse with God, we should then know even before we received what we asked, how great a gain we must reap by its fruit; for a man who is trained to converse with God as we ought, will afterwards be an angel. It is thus that his soul is loosened from the bonds of the body; thus his reason is lifted on high; thus is his home removed to heaven; thus does he look above the things of this life; thus is he stationed by the royal throne itself, though he be poor, though he be a servant, obscure and unlettered. For God seeketh not the beauty of language, nor the composition of words, but the loveliness of the soul; and if that speak what is well-pleasing to Him, the man goes away with the full accomplishment of his purpose. See you how great facility is here? Among men, when a man applies to any one, he must needs be a good speaker, and must well flatter those who are about the great man, and devise many other schemes to insure a favourable reception; but here he wants nothing but a sober mind, and then there is nothing to prevent his being nigh to God, ‘for I am a God drawing nigh, and not a God far off.’ So that to be far off is owing to ourselves, for He is Himself always near. And why, say I, that we need not oratory? Often we do not even need a voice; for even if you speak in your hearts, and call upon Him aright, He will readily assent even then.

“No soldier stands by to drive you away; no javelin-bearer to cut off the opportunity; no one to say, You cannot approach Him now, come again. But whenever you come, He is standing to hear; be it in the time of dinner, or of supper, at midnight, in the market-place, in the way, in the chamber; though you approach within, and present yourself to the Ruler in his judgment-hall, and call Him. There is nothing to hinder Him from assenting to your request, if you call on Him aright. There is no ground for saying, I fear to approach and present my petition; my enemy is standing by. Even this obstacle is removed. He will not attend to your enemy, and cut short your suit. You may always and continually plead with Him, and there is no difficulty.

“There is no need of porters to introduce you; nor stewards, nor comptrollers, nor guards, nor friends; but when you by yourself approach, then He will most of all listen to you; then, I say, when you ask no one. We do not so much prevail with Him when we ask by others; as when we ask by ourselves; for since it is our own friendship He loves, He takes every means of fixing our confidence in Him. When He sees us doing this by ourselves, then He especially grants our request. Thus did He in the case of the woman of Canaan: when Peter and James applied to Him in her behalf, He did not assent; but when she herself persevered, He soon granted her request. For though He seemed to defer it for a little while, He did so, not to put her off, but to crown her the more, and to draw her supplication nearer to Himself. Let us therefore take good heed to approach God in prayer; and let us learn how we ought to offer our prayer.”

On the importunity and success of this Syrophœnician, Chrysostom dwells repeatedly, and in such a manner as to force us to believe that he cannot himself have had recourse to the invocation of any other being than God alone, or have suggested to others any confidence in the intercession of any other

mediator than Christ only, certainly not making an exception in favour of the Virgin Mary. In his comment on Genesis, chap. xvi.³, he furnishes us with many valuable reflections on the mercy of the Saviour, and the holy confidence with which true Christians may rest all their hopes in Him, and approach Him in prayer, with sure trust that they will never be sent empty away. But on the general sentiments of Chrysostom, as to the duty of our praying only to God through the mediation of his blessed Son, without interposing any other mediation, we will confine ourselves to two more extracts; the first from his Homily, composed expressly on the woman of Canaan; the other from his Comment on the Epistle to the Romans. In the first passage we read these words:

“‘And Jesus going out thence, went into the parts of Tyre and Sidon, and behold a woman!’ The Evangelist wonders, ‘Behold a woman!’ the ancient armour of the devil, she who expelled me from paradise, the mother of sin, the prime leader of transgression. That very woman comes, that very nature, a new and unlooked for wonder. The Jews fly from her, and the woman follows Him. ‘And behold a woman, coming out from those coasts, besought Him, saying, O Lord, thou son of David, have mercy on me.’ The woman becomes an Evangelist, and acknowledges his divinity and the dispensation. ‘O Lord,’ here she confesses his sovereignty: ‘Thou son of David,’ here his incarnation: ‘Have mercy on me,’ see her wise spirit. ‘Have mercy on me;’ I have no good deeds; I have no confidence from my manner of life; I betake myself to mercy, to the common haven of sinners; I betake myself to mercy, where is no judgment-seat, where my safety is freed from investigation. Though she were thus a sinner and a transgressor, she is bold enough to approach. And see the wisdom of the woman! She calls not on James, she does not supplicate John, she approaches not Peter, she does

³ Vol. iv. p. 386.

not force her way through their company. 'I have no need of a mediator; but taking repentance to plead with me, I approach the Fountain itself. For this cause He came down, for this cause He became incarnate, that I might converse with Him.' The Cherubim tremble at Him above, and here below a harlot converses with Him. 'Have mercy on me.' It is a simple word, and yet it finds a fathomless sea of salvation: 'Have mercy on me. For this cause Thou didst come; for this cause Thou tookedst upon thee flesh; for this cause Thou becamest what I am. Above is trembling, below is confidence. Have mercy on me. I have no need of a mediator. Have mercy on me!'"

In the other passage, to which we adverted above, we find Chrysostom thus commenting on the Apostolic benediction:—

"'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.' See you whence we ought to begin, and where to end all things. For from this He laid the foundation of his epistle, and from this also he put on its roof; at once both praying for the parent of all good things for them⁴, and mentioning also every benefit. For the chief province of a true instructor is to benefit his disciples, not by word only but also by prayer; wherefore, he says, we will persevere in prayer, and in the ministration of the word. WHO THEN WILL PRAY FOR US, NOW THAT PAUL HAS GONE AWAY? THESE WHO ARE IMITATORS OF PAUL. Only let us render ourselves worthy of such patronage, that we may not only hear Paul's voice here, but even when we go thither may be found worthy to see the champion of Christ. And if we listen to him here, we shall the rather see him there; even though not ourselves standing near, yet we shall at all events see him shining near the royal throne. There the cherubim glorify, there the seraphim fly; these we shall see, together with Peter and the choir of saints, Paul being their chief leader

⁴ Chrysostom has been here misunderstood; he speaks of grace as the parent, or mother of every blessing.

and president⁵; and we shall enjoy true love. For if when he was here he so loved men, that on the choice being offered him to depart and to be with Christ, he chose to be here, how much more ardent will he show his love there!"

Here it may be asked, whether it is within the verge of probability that St. Chrysostom, when he speaks of these things in this manner, could have believed it lawful and beneficial for a Christian to pray to any other mediator, or through any other intercessor in heaven, than Christ alone? "I want no mediator." "She applies not to the Apostles." "Who shall pray for us, now Paul is gone?" Is it conceivable that, had he practised the invocation of saints, he would not have alluded to it here; and have assured his disciples that, though Paul was absent, yet he was still carrying on the office of intercessor, and that he should be implored by us to carry it on. Instead of this, he tells them, that those who were imitators and followers of Paul would pray for them, now that Paul was gone.

But to proceed with the immediate subject of our inquiry into what was Chrysostom's faith and practice with regard to the Virgin Mary. Is she made an exception?

For the dignity to which it pleased the Almighty to raise her, that she should be the mother of our Lord, Chrysostom held the Virgin's memory in reverence, and he strenuously maintained that she remained a virgin unspotted to the day of her death. But while he professes no sentiments of honour towards her which a true and enlightened member of the Church of England would not profess; at the same time he reflects on her conduct upon one occa-

⁵ It may be remarked, that in this passage not Peter but Paul is represented as the chief leader and president of the saints, even when Peter is also named.

⁶ Vol. ix. p. 756.

sion, and speaks of her knowledge and state of mind generally with regard to our Saviour, in terms which few members of our Church would be disposed to employ.

Chrysostom generally calls the Virgin simply Mary; seldom adding any epithet expressive of her sanctity and blessedness. He never calls her "Mother of God." He declares her to be a pure and unpoluted virgin⁷, and finds in the Old Testament types and figures by which her office was foreshadowed. In one place⁸, he tells us that Eden, signifying a virgin-land, in which God, without the work of man, planted a garden, prefigured the Virgin, who, without knowing a man, brought forth Christ. In another part⁹, he considers Eve and the tree of knowledge, and death when man fell, to correspond with Mary, and the tree of the cross, and our Lord's death, which gained for us the victory; that as a virgin's fault caused us to be expelled from paradise, so by the instrumentality of a virgin, we found eternal life¹⁰. He thinks her superior excellence showed itself in her admirable self-command, when she heard announced to her that she should bring forth the Saviour, behaving with exemplary modesty, instead of being transported by a sudden burst of excessive joy¹. He regards the flight into Egypt as a means of making Mary conspicuous, and a bright object of admiration². She was given, he says, by the angel to the care of Joseph, as she was by Christ upon the cross to John, in order to protect and defend herself and her character from reproach and oppression³.

We must now direct our especial attention to three passages in the genuine works of Chrysostom, and weigh well the import of his words in each as indications of his general sentiments concerning the Virgin Mary. First, his remarks on our Lord's

⁷ Vol. iii. p. 16.

⁸ Vol. iii. p. 113.

⁹ Vol. iii. p. 752.

¹⁰ Vol. v. p. 171.

¹ Vol. vii. p. 34.

² P. 125. ³ P. 57.

words at the marriage-feast at Cana; secondly, his account of what took place at the cross; and thirdly, his representation of the Virgin's conduct, and our Lord's words on that previous occasion, when his mother and his brethren stood outside the house desiring to see Jesus. The question will force itself upon our mind, Could the Virgin Mary have been regarded by St. Chrysostom, or by those whom he addressed, as she is now regarded by the Church of Rome?

1. His account of the miracle of turning water into wine, St. Chrysostom thus prefaces⁴:—

“No unimportant question is propounded to us to-day; when the mother of Jesus said ‘They have no wine;’ Christ said, ‘Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come;’ and though He said this, He did what his mother suggested. Invoking, then, Him Himself who wrought the miracle, let us proceed to the solution of the difficulty. Christ was not subject to the necessity of seasons, for He pre-eminently assigned to seasons themselves their order; for He was their Maker. But John introduces Christ using this expression, ‘Mine hour is not yet come,’ to show that He was not yet manifested to the great body of the people, and that He had not as yet the full complement of his Apostles; but that Andrew and Philip followed Him and no other. Nay, rather, not even these all knew Him as He ought to be known; not even HIS MOTHER nor his brethren. For after his numerous miracles the Evangelist says this of his brethren: ‘For neither did his brethren believe in Him.’ But neither did those at the marriage know Him; otherwise they would have come to Him, and sought his aid in their want. On this account He says, ‘Mine hour is not yet come. I am not known to those who are present; nay, they do not even know that the wine has failed. Suffer

⁴ Vol. viii. p. 125.

them to become aware of this first. I ought not to learn this from you; for you are my mother, and you throw suspicion on my miracle. Those who want it, ought to come and ask; not because I need this, but that they may receive what is done in full acquiescence.' And for what reason (some one will say) after saying, 'Mine hour is not yet come,' and after refusing, did He do what his mother said? Chiefly to afford to gainsayers, and those who think Him subject to times and seasons, a sufficient demonstration that He was not subject to times. In the second place, He did it because He honoured his mother; that He might not appear to contradict her entirely throughout; that He might not expose Himself to the suspicion of weakness; that He might not in the presence of so many put his mother to shame; for she had brought the servants to Him. Thus it was that though He said to the woman of Canaan, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and give it to dogs,' yet He granted the boon afterwards, because He was affected by her perseverance. Yea, moreover, though He said, 'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;' yet afterwards He healed the woman's daughter. Hence we learn that though we be unworthy, yet by our perseverance we may make ourselves worthy to receive. Wherefore also his mother remained, and wisely brought the servants, so that the request might be made by more persons. She consequently added, 'Whatsoever He shall say to you, do it.' For she knew that the refusal was not from want of power, but from the absence of boastful display; and that He might not seem absolutely to throw Himself upon the miracle, she therefore brought the servants."

This author's assertion, that Mary was not even herself acquainted with our Lord's real character and dispensation, is by no means confined to that passage; in some instances, indeed, it has called forth the animadversion of his editors. Thus, in his exposition of

the Psalmist's words, which he thus renders, "God shall come manifestly, our God, and shall not keep silence," he says—

"See you how He proceeds gradually to open his word and reveal the treasure, and emit a more cheerful ray, saying, 'God shall come manifestly!' Why? When was He not present manifestly? At his former advent. For He came without noise, hidden from the many, and for a long time escaping observation. Why do I speak of THE MANY? whereas, NOT EVEN THE VIRGIN WHO CONCEIVED HIM KNEW THE IN-EFFABLE MYSTERY, nor even his brethren believed on Him; nor he who appeared to be his father formed any high opinion of Him⁵."

2. The following is Chrysostom's comment upon the act of our blessed Saviour when He commended his sorrowing mother to his beloved disciple⁶:—

"But He Himself hanging on the cross commends his mother to his disciple, teaching us to our last breath to take every affectionate care of our parents. Thus, when she unseasonably annoyed Him, He said, 'What have I to do with thee?' and 'Who is my mother?' But here He shows much natural affection, and entrusts her to the disciple whom He loved. . . . Observe how freely from agitation He does every thing, even when hanging on the cross; conversing with his disciple about his mother, fulfilling the prophecies, suggesting good hope in the thief. . . . Now the women stood by the cross; and the weaker sex appears the more manly. And He Himself commends his mother, 'Behold thy Son!' Oh, for the honour! With what honour does He invest the disciple! For when He is going Himself away, He delivers her to the disciple to take care of her. For since it was probable that she as a mother would grieve, and look for protection, He with reason commits her to the hands of one who loved Him. To him He says,

⁵ Vol. v. p. 225.

⁶ Vol. viii. p. 305.

‘Behold thy mother!’ This He said to unite them in love; and the disciple understanding this took her to his own home. But why did He make mention of no other woman though another stood by? To teach us to pay more than common attention to our mothers. For as we must not know those parents who oppose themselves in spiritual things, so when they interpose no obstacle in those matters, it is right to pay them every respect, and to place them above the rest, because they gave us birth, and nourished us, and underwent so many thousand dangers. Thus, too, does He silence the impudence of Marcion; for had He not been born in the flesh, nor had a mother, why should He have taken such care of her alone?”

3. In Chrysostom’s homily on St. Matthew xii. 46, we read the comment which we must now quote. We do not wonder at the Benedictine editor exclaiming in the margin, as he does very quaintly, “Fair words, Chrysostom!” Had a member of the Church of England published such sentiments now, he would probably have been reprov’d by members of his own communion. The propriety, however, or incorrectness of Chrysostom’s observation, is not at all before us; but we may confidently ask, Could he have addressed such a homily to the faithful Christians of his day, if either he or they entertained those sentiments with regard to the Virgin Mary, which are professed by our Roman Catholic brethren; if he, or the Church, had then invoked her in supplication, or trusted to her intercession, and mediation, and advocacy; and sung praises to her as the Queen of heaven, in dignity, and power, and glory, above the Seraphim?

“What I lately said, that if virtue be absent all besides is superfluous, this is now proved abundantly. I was saying that age, and nature, and the living in a wilderness, and all such things were unprofitable, unless our principle and purpose were good; but to-day

we learn something more, that not even the conceiving of Christ in the womb, and bringing forth that wonderful birth, hath any advantage, if there be not virtue; and that is especially manifest from this circumstance⁸: ‘While He was yet speaking,’ says the Evangelist, ‘some one says to Him, Thy mother and thy brethren seek Thee; and He said, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?’ Now, this He said not because He felt ashamed of his mother, nor with the intention of denying her who brought Him forth; (for had He been ashamed, He would not have passed through her womb;) but it was to show that she would derive no advantage from this, unless she did her duty in every thing. For what she was then undertaking was the effect of EXCESSIVE AMBITION; for she wished to show to the people that she commanded and controlled her Son, she having as yet formed no high opinion of Him. Consequently, she comes to Him unseasonably.

“Now, see the FOOLISH ARROGANCE⁹ both of herself and of them. Whereas they ought to have entered, and heard Him with the multitude; or had they been unwilling to do this, to have waited till He had finished his discourse, and then to have approached Him; they call for Him out: and this they do before all, exhibiting their excessive ambition, and wishing to show that they commanded Him with great authority. A point this which the Evangelist marks with disapprobation; for it was to intimate this, that he said, ‘While He was yet speaking to the multitude;’ as much as if he had said, ‘What! was there no other opportunity? What! could they not have conversed with Him in private? And what after all did

⁸ Even Calvin dissents from this view of Chrysostom (which is also the view of Ambrose), and says their views are groundless and unworthy of the piety of the Virgin. Calvin in loc. vol. vi. p. 142.

⁹ *Ἀρόνοια, vesana quædam insolentia et animi elatio.* Steph. The Benedictines translate it *arrogantia*; the Library of the Fathers, ‘Self-confidence.’

they want to say? If it was on the doctrines of the truth, then it was right He should propound them to all in common, and to speak before all that others also might be benefited; but if it was on other subjects interesting to themselves, they ought not to have been thus urgent. For if He would not suffer a man to bury his father, that his following of Him might not be broken off, much more ought not his address to have been interrupted for things which were not of interest to Him.' Hence it is evident that they did this solely out of vain glory. And John shows this when he says, 'Neither did his brethren believe on Him;' and he records some words of theirs full of great folly, when he tells us that they took Him to Jerusalem, not for any other purpose, but that they might derive glory from his miracles. 'If Thou do these things,' said they, 'show thyself to the world, for no one doeth any thing in secret, and seeketh himself to be conspicuous;' at which time He rebuked them for this, and reproved their carnal mind. For when the Jews reproached Him, saying, 'Is not this the carpenter's son, whose father and mother we know? and his brethren are they not among us?' they wishing to get rid of the charge from the meanness of his origin, excited Him to a display of miracles. He, therefore, gives them a repulse, wishing to heal their malady; since, had He desired to deny his mother, He would surely have denied her, when they cast this reproach. On the contrary, He shows Himself to have entertained so great care for her, that on the very cross He intrusts her to the disciple who was his best-beloved of all, and leaves many kind injunctions concerning her. But He does not so now, and that because of his care for her and his brethren; for since they approached Him as a mere man, and were puffed up with vain glory, He expels that disease, not by insulting, but by correcting them.

"He did not wish to excite doubts in the mind, but to remove the most tyrannical of passions, and by

little and little to lead to a correct estimate of Himself, and to persuade her that He was not only her Son, but her Sovereign Lord. You will thus see that the rebuke was eminently becoming in Him, and profitable to her, and withal containing much of mildness. He did not say, 'Go, tell the mother she is not my mother;' but He answered him who brought the message thus, 'Who is my mother?' together with what has been already said, effecting another object—that neither should they nor any others, trusting to their connexions, neglect virtue. For if it profited HER nothing to be his mother, unless that qualification were added, scarcely will any one else be saved in consequence of his relationship. There is only one nobility of birth, the doing of the will of God. This is a kind of good birth far better and nobler than the other."

In the next section, too long to transcribe into these pages, (though its paragraphs contain many sentiments, all leading to the same point,) we read these expressions:

"When a woman said, 'Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked,' He does not say, 'Her womb did not bear me, I sucked not her paps,' but this, 'Yea, rather, blessed are they who do the will of my Father.' You see how, every where, He does not deny the relationship of nature, but He adds that of virtue. . . . The same object He is effecting here [as in his remonstrance with the Jews as children of Abraham], but less severely, and with more gentleness; for his speech related to his mother. He did not say, 'She is not my mother, they are not my brethren, because they do not the will of my Father.' He did not pass his sentence, and condemn them; but left them the option, speaking with a considerateness which became Him. 'He that doeth the will of my Father, he is my brother, and sister, and mother; so that if they wish to be such, let them enter upon this path.' And when the woman cried out, 'Blessed is the womb that bare Thee,' He says

not, 'She is not my mother;' but, 'If she wishes to be blessed, let her do the will of my Father, for such a one is my brother, and sister, and mother.' Oh, how great an honour! How great is virtue! To what an exalted eminence does it carry one who embraces it! How many women have called that holy Virgin and her womb blessed, and have longed to be such mothers, and to give up every thing besides! What is there to hinder them? For behold, He has cut out for us a broad way, and it is in the power, not of women only, but of men also, to be placed in such a rank as that, rather in a much higher one; for this far more constitutes one his mother, than did those labour-pangs. So if that is a cause for calling a person blessed, much more is this, inasmuch as it is paramount. Do not, then, merely desire, but also with much diligence walk along the path which leads to the object of your desire. Having said this, He went out of the house. See how He both rebuked them, and also did what they desired. The same thing also He did at the marriage; for there, too, He rebuked her when she unseasonably applied to Him, and yet did not refuse; by the first act correcting her weakness, by the second showing his goodwill towards his mother. So here also, He both healed the disease of vain glory, and yet rendered becoming honour to his mother, although she was preferring an unseasonable request."

Thus is the testimony of St. Chrysostom, beyond controversy, conclusive against the present doctrine of the Church of Rome, as to the worship of the Virgin Mary, and against our supposing that the prevalence of any religious trust in her merits, intercession, and advocacy, was familiar to him. And this brings us within the commencement of the fifth century.

Before we proceed to the evidence of St. Augustine, it may be well to refer to John Cassian, who was at first one of St. Chrysostom's deacons, and who after-

wards removing to Gaul, was ordained priest at Marseilles. He composed many theological dissertations in Latin, in which he writes at much length on the duty of prayer, and on the objects and subjects of a Christian's prayer; but he speaks only of prayer to God, without any allusion to the present influence or advocacy of the Virgin, or to any invocation of her to be made by Christians¹⁰.

In his treatise on the Incarnation of Christ, he argues against those who would call Mary *Christotocos*, 'She who brought forth Christ,' and not *Theotocos*, 'She who brought forth God;' but he speaks not of any worship due to herself on that account. His mind was fixed upon the union of the divine and human nature in Him who was Son of God and of man¹.

St. Augustine, A.D. 430².

Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in Africa, was born about A.D. 354, and died at an advanced age, A.D. 430, the very year before the Council of Ephesus, to which he was summoned.

When we reflect on the rapidity with which Pagan superstition invaded the integrity and purity of primitive worship, after the conversion of Constantine, and how much the influence of many unhallowed innovations had mingled itself with the spirit of Christianity, when Augustine was first initiated into the mysteries of our holy religion, our surprise may be great, that his works, full and noble monuments of Gospel truth, present so few stains of an unscriptural and unprimitive character. We cannot, indeed, appeal to him as one who when he was compelled to walk in the midst of the furnace yet felt no hurt, and on whose garments the smell of fire had not passed (this would

¹⁰ Collat. ix.

¹ De Incarn. lib. ii. c. 2.

² Paris, 1700.

have required an interposition of the Most High, like that which preserved the three faithful martyrs in the furnace of Babylon); but while some points, even in Augustine, indications of frail man, warn us, with voices strong and clear, to look for our rule of faith only to the written word of God, to which he himself most constantly appealed; we have cause for thankfulness, that the great Head of the Church raised up at that season this burning and shining light, who, as the servant of the Holy Spirit, yet still only as a fallible and an erring brother, will continue to enlighten, and guide, and support the children of God, as long as sacred literature has a place on earth.

Augustine found a large portion of the Christian world leaning decidedly to superstition, and encouraging the substitution of human learning and a degenerate philosophy, for the simplicity of the Gospel. From time to time, as occasion offered, he recalled his fellow-believers from those superstitions to which converts clung when they professed to resign Paganism for Christianity; and he discountenanced those subtle disquisitions which flattered the pride of our nature, but were little in accordance with the truth as it is in Jesus. He found many substituting the angels and martyrs, of whom they heard in Christian churches and read in Christian books, for the gods many and lords many, whom their fathers had served; and some of his most powerful and eloquent compositions are directed to the counteraction of that evil. But he did not so vigorously as he might have done, set about the utter eradication of the growing bane; and sometimes, in the unrestrained flow of his eloquence, he would address the subject of his eulogy in such a manner as even to supply arguments from his example for the very practices which he disowned. The principle on which he professed to act, in the case of unauthorized novelties in Christian worship, seems, to a certain extent at least, to have guided him gene-

rally :—" Approve of these things I cannot; reprove them more freely I dare not³." Still, his pure and exalted sentiments on the subject of religious worship must have materially tended, within the sphere of their influence, to withdraw men's minds from all other objects of invocation, and to fix them on the one only supreme God; as also to withdraw them from all other mediators and intercessors, and induce them to anchor their hopes on the mediation and intercession of Christ Jesus our Lord alone.

It cannot be necessary to refer to those works, which though once attributed to St. Augustine, are acknowledged by the best critics, and even by the Benedictines, to be utterly spurious; such, for example, as the "*Book of Meditations*," in which prayer is offered to God through the intercession of the Virgin, and prayer is also offered to herself. It is lamentable to find some Roman Catholic writers so forgetful of the principle which should guide us all, as even at the present day⁴ to quote passages from such works as evidence of Augustine's faith.

It may be safe and interesting, before we proceed to Augustine's testimony on the immediate subject of our inquiry, to recal to our minds one or two passages in confirmation of the views we have given above of his principles and sentiments on Christian worship in general.

In his book on "*True Religion*," Augustine thus speaks⁵ :—

" Let not our religion be the worship of dead men, because if they lived piously they are not so disposed as to seek such honours; but they wish Him to

³ Vol. ii. p. 142. Epist. ad Januar. 55, s. 35.

⁴ See Kirk and Berrington, p. 445. It is painful to observe that whereas those authors quote in other cases from the Benedictine editors, J700, which (vol. vi. Appendix, p. 103) pronounces this book to be a forgery, they here refer to the edition of 1586, without even alluding to any doubt as to the genuineness of the work.

- ⁵ Vol. i. p. 786.

be worshipped by us, by whom being enlightened they rejoice that we are deemed worthy of being partakers with them. They are to be honoured, then, on the ground of imitation, not to be adored on the ground of religion; and if they lived ill, wherever they be, they must not be worshipped.

“This also we may believe, that the most perfect angels themselves, and the most excellent servants of God wish that we with ourselves should worship God, in the contemplation of whom they are blessed. Therefore we honour them with love, not with service. Nor do we build temples to them; for they are unwilling to be so honoured by us, because they know that when we are good we are as temples to the most high God. Well, therefore, is it written, that a man was forbidden by an angel to adore him.”

Moreover, we think it impossible that St. Augustine looked to any other mediator or intercessor than Christ alone. Surely his comment on the words of St. John he could never have left without any modification or explanation, had he been accustomed to pray to God trusting in the mediation of the Virgin Mary, or of any other than the Lord Jesus alone:—

“‘We have an advocate with the Father.’ Ye see John himself preserving humility. Certainly he was a righteous and great man who drank from the bosom of the Lord mysterious secrets; he who imbibing divine truth from the breast of the Lord uttered, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.’ He being such a man said not, ‘YE have an advocate with the Father,’ but ‘If any man sin, WE have an advocate.’ He says not, ‘YE have,’ nor ‘Ye have ME;’ nor does he say, ‘YE have Christ Himself;’ but as he puts ‘Christ,’ not ‘himself,’ so does he say, ‘WE have,’ not ‘YE have.’ He had rather put himself in the number of sinners, that he might have Christ for his advocate, than put himself as an advocate in Christ’s stead, and be found among the proud who must be condemned. My brethren, we have Jesus

Christ Himself our advocate with the Father—He is the propitiation for our sins. But some one will say, ‘What then, do not holy persons pray for us (sancti)? What then, do not the Bishops and chiefs pray for the people?’ Nay, attend to the Scripture, and see that the chiefs even commend themselves to the people; for the Apostle says to the people, ‘Praying at the same time for us also?’ The Apostle prays for the people, the people pray for the Apostle. ‘We pray for you, brethren, but pray ye also for us. Let all the members pray mutually for each other, and the Head intercede for all.’”

This subject had evidently impressed itself strongly and deeply on St. Augustine’s mind. Thus we find him again, in his refutation of Parmenianus, expressing himself in words which were they written by a divine of our Church now, would be considered to have been directed expressly against the present errors of Rome.

“John says, ‘I write this, that ye sin not.’ If it had followed thus, and he had said, ‘If any one sin, ye have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for your sins,’ he might seem, as it were, to have separated himself from sinners, so that he might no longer have had need of the propitiation which is made by the Mediator sitting at the right hand of the Father, and interceding for us. This, doubtless, he would have said, not only proudly but also falsely. And had he thus said, ‘This have I written to you that ye sin not; and if any man sin, ye have ME for a mediator with the Father, and I pray pardon for your sins’ (as Parmenianus somewhere puts the bishop as a mediator between the people and God), what good and faithful Christian would endure him? Who would regard him as an Apostle of Christ, and not as antichrist? All Christian men mutually commend them-

selves to each other's prayers : but He, for whom no one intercedes, while He intercedes for all, is the one and the true Mediator, the type of whom in the Old Testament is the priest ; and no one is there found to have prayed for the priest. Thus let the mutual prayers of all yet toiling on the earth, ascend to the Head who is gone before us into heaven, in whom is the propitiation for our sins. For were Paul a mediator, so would his fellow-apostles be mediators ; and Paul's reasoning would be inconsistent with himself, by which he said, 'There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus'.⁷''

These are by no means solitary passages ; indeed the works of St. Augustine breathe the same spirit throughout. We will refer, however, only to one more passage, which is found in his "Confessions".

"Whom could I find who could reconcile me to Thee ? Was I to betake myself to the angels ? With what prayer ? By what sacraments ? The Mediator between God and man must have somewhat of the likeness of God, and somewhat of the likeness of man ; lest being in both cases like man, he might be far from God ; or being in both like God, he might be far from man, and so would not be a mediator. . . . The true Mediator whom by thy secret mercy Thou hast shown to the humble, and whom Thou hast sent, that by his example they might learn humility, that Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, appeared between sinful mortals and the righteous and immortal One. How didst Thou love us, O good Father, who sparedst not thine only Son, but didst deliver Him for us ungodly men ! Deservedly is my hope strong in this, that Thou wilt heal all my infirmities by Him who sitteth at thy right hand, and intercedes with Thee for us ; otherwise I should despair."

Is it possible to conceive that this holy man, when

⁷ Vol. ix. p. 34.

⁸ Vol. i. pp. 93, 194.

he presented his prayers to the blessed and eternal Trinity, carried to the throne of grace in his heart, or on his tongue, the advocacy of any being, save only the eternal Son of God and man?

To the question, What is St. Augustine's testimony as to the worship of the Virgin Mary? the only answer which can be made is this—That from the first to the last page of his voluminous works there is not found a single passage which would lead us to suppose that he either prayed to her himself, or was aware that the invocation of her formed any part of the worship of his fellow-Christians, either in their public assemblies, or at their private devotions; nor is there a single expression which would induce us to believe that Augustine looked to her for any aid, spiritual or temporal, or placed any confidence whatever in her mediation and intercession. On the contrary, there is accumulated and convincing evidence, that he knew nothing of her worship, let it be called *dulia*, or *hyperdulia*; that he was a stranger to the doctrine of her immaculate conception, her assumption into heaven, and to festivals instituted in honour of her. In a word, though he maintains strong opinions on some points left open by our Church, his belief and sentiments in all essentials corresponded with the belief and sentiments of the Church of England, and were utterly inconsistent with the present belief and practice of the Church of Rome.

Many of the spurious works ascribed to St. Augustine contain passages strongly impregnated with errors, which owe their origin to an age long after he was taken to his rest; and such spurious works are still quoted, without any intimation of their doubtful or supposititious character. Thus, in a work called "The Manual of Devotion, by Ambrose Lisle Phillips, Esq., of Grace Dieu Manor" (Derby, 1843), the author says, "The ancient Fathers of the early

Church give us full warrant to apply to the blessed Virgin all the passages of Scripture which may also be applied to the Church. Thus the glorious St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in the third discourse to the catechumens on the creed, applies the vision of St. John the Evangelist, in the 12th chapter of the Apocalypse, where he sees a woman clothed with the sun, and a crown of twelve stars on her head, as referring to our blessed Lady. Vol. vi. Paris, 1837; p. 965." It is astonishing to find this sermon thus quoted as St. Augustine's, when in the very volume in which it is found, the editor prefaces the sermons (to the third of which the above author refers, as an acknowledged work of St. Augustine, and without the slightest allusion to its condemnation as spurious) with this heading (p. 930), "Here follow three other sermons on the creed, which by no means bring Augustine before us, to whom hitherto, in former editions, they have been ascribed; but an orator far his inferior in the character of his speaking, in learning, and in talent."

St. Augustine is not one of those who, either from the scantiness of his remains, or the nature of his works, might leave us in doubt as to his sentiments on this head; for he is led, in very many parts, to speak of the Virgin Mary, her nature, and her character, both directly and incidentally. On two subjects of especial interest to him, he is led to speak of her in every variety of light: the one subject is the incarnation of the Son of God; the other is the institution of the life of virginity by professed and devoted virgins, a life which he says originally derived its dignity from her¹⁰. He maintains that Mary was a devoted virgin before the angel's salutation, and that so she remained to her death. He considers her a bright example of religious and moral excellence; and¹ FOR THE HONOUR OF OUR LORD, he wishes no question

¹⁰ Vol. v. p. 296.¹ Vol. x. p. 144.

to be entertained as to her being guilty of sin. He says that her question 'How shall this be?' did not imply a want of faith in her, but only a desire to know God's pleasure²; and that she conceived Christ in her soul through faith, before she conceived Him in her womb. He calls her The Virgin Mary, The Holy³ Mary, The Mother of our Lord, a virgin when she conceived, when she brought forth, and when she died. He never uses the expression 'Mother of God.'

He speaks of the Virgin dying⁴, but he alludes not to her assumption. He speaks of the conception⁵ of her by her father and mother, but he expressly says she was conceived and born in sin, though she herself conceived without spot or stain of sin, and gave birth to the sinless Saviour. Instead of representing her as the bride and spouse of the Almighty (a title too commonly applied to her by our Roman Catholic brethren), he represents her as the chamber⁶ only in which the Divine Word was, as a bridegroom, united to his human nature as his bride. He considers the tradition which represents the Virgin as having been the daughter of Joachim, of the tribe of Levi, to have been drawn by Faustus⁷ from an apocryphal source; and if he were induced to regard Joachim as her father at all, he would consider him as appertaining not to the sacerdotal tribe of Levi, but the regal tribe of Judah. He tells us that angels adore Christ in the flesh⁸, sitting at the right hand of the Father; but for any rejoicing of the angels on the Virgin's admission to heaven, such as the Roman service on the day of her supposed assumption asserts, we look into Augustine's works in vain.

But it will be more satisfactory to quote more fully some few of the passages which embody his senti-

² Vol. v. p. 1167.

³ Vol. v. p. 251.

⁴ Vol. vi. p. 239.

⁵ Vol. iv. p. 241; vol. x. p. 654; and vol. iii. part i. p. 268.

⁶ Vol. iii. part ii. p. 354.

⁷ Vol. viii. p. 427.

⁸ Vol. v. p. 970.

ments on the subject of our inquiry: many such there are, edifying and interesting in themselves, as well as valuable testimonies on the point at issue. The question will repeatedly force itself on the reader of *St. Augustine*, Could this writer have suppliantly invoked the Virgin? Could he have hoped for acceptance with God, through her intercession? If, for example, we examine his treatise on the twelfth verse of the second chapter of *St. John*—"After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples;" we read this comment:—

"You will find that all the relatives of Mary are brethren of Christ; but the disciples were still more his brethren, for even those relatives would not have been his brethren had they not been his disciples; and without any reason would they have been his brethren, had they not acknowledged their brother for their master. For in a certain place, when his mother and his brethren were announced to Him as standing without, and He was speaking with his disciples, He said, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?' and stretching forth his hand to his disciples He said, 'These are my brethren; and whoever will do the will of my Father, he is my mother, and brother, and sister;' therefore was also Mary, because she did the will of the Father. In her the Lord magnified this, that she did the will of the Father, not that flesh gave birth to flesh. Attend to this, my dear friends. Wherefore, when the Lord seemed the object of admiration in a crowd, working signs and wonders, and showing what was hidden in his flesh, some souls admiring Him said, 'Happy the womb that bare Thee;' and He answered, 'Yea, happy are they who hear the word of God and keep it.' This is to say, Even my mother, whom you call happy, is therefore happy because she keeps the word of God, not because in her the Word was made flesh and dwelt

* Vol. iii. part ii. p. 369.

in us ; but because she keeps the Word of God, by which she was made, and which was made flesh in her. Let not men rejoice in their temporal offspring ; let them leap for joy, if they are in Spirit joined to God."

At the commencement of his book on Virginhood, he thus comments on the same passage¹ :

"What else does he teach us but to prefer our spiritual family to our carnal relationships? and that men are not blessed, because they are joined to just and holy men by kindred, but if they are united with them by obeying and imitating their instructions and moral character. Consequently Mary was more blessed by receiving the faith of Christ than by conceiving the flesh of Christ. . . . Finally, what did their relationship profit his brethren, that is, his relatives according to the flesh, who did not believe on Him? So also the near relationship of a mother would have profited Mary nothing, unless she had carried Christ more happily in her heart than in the flesh. He, the offspring of one holy virgin, is the ornament of all holy virgins ; and they, together with Mary, are mothers of Christ, if they do his Father's will; hence also Mary is in a more praiseworthy and blessed manner the mother of Christ. He spiritually exhibits all these relationships in the people whom He has redeemed ; He regards as his brothers and sisters holy men and holy women, because they are joint heirs in the heavenly inheritance. The whole Church is his mother, because she truly bears, by the grace of God, his members, that is, his faithful ones. So, likewise, every pious soul is his mother, doing the will of his Father with most fruitful love, in those whom she brings forth, until He be formed in them. Mary, therefore, doing the will of God, is bodily only the mother of Christ, but spiritually his mother and his sister."

In his comment on our Lord's address to his mother

¹ Vol. vi. p. 342.

at the marriage-feast, Augustine deems it necessary to refute the false inferences of two opposite classes of men: first, those who from the words, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" maintained that Mary was not the mother of the Lord Jesus; and secondly, those fatalists (mathematicians he calls them) who alleged Christ's last words to her, "Mine hour is not yet come," in proof that our Saviour Himself was under the necessity of destiny. In his refutation of the latter error, there is nothing which we need quote here. In his answer to the former, his words may help us in forming a correct view of the habitual sentiments entertained by him of the Virgin, and of her office and character:

"The Lord, when invited, came to a marriage². What marvel that He should go into that house to a marriage, who came into this world for a marriage? For had He not come to a marriage, He would not have had a bride. He has a bride, whom He redeemed by his blood; and to whom He gave the Holy Spirit as a pledge. He rescued her from the thralldom of the devil; He died for her transgressions; He rose again for her justification. Who will offer so much to his bride? Let men offer any adorning presents of the earth,—gold, silver, precious stones, horses, slaves, fields, and farms; will any one offer his own blood? But the Lord, secure in his death, gave his own blood for her, whom, at his resurrection, He might have, whom He had already united to Himself in the Virgin's womb. For the Word is the bridegroom, and his human flesh is the bride; and both are one Son of God, and the same the Son of man. When He was made the Head of the Church, that womb of the Virgin Mary was the bride-chamber: then He went forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber. As the Scripture saith, 'He went as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiced as a giant to run his

² Vol. iii. part ii. pp. 354, 355. 357.

course;—He went from his chamber as a bridegroom, and being invited He came to a marriage. For some undoubted mystery, He seems not to acknowledge the mother from whom he proceeded as a bridegroom.

“Why then does the Son say to the mother, ‘What have I to do with thee, mine hour is not yet come?’ Our Lord Jesus Christ was both God and man; in that He was God, He had no mother; in that He was man, He had. She, therefore, was the mother of his flesh, the mother of his humanity, the mother of the infirmity which He took upon Him for our sakes. But He was about to perform the miracle according to his divinity, not according to his infirmity; in that He was God, not in that He was born a weak man. The weakness of God is stronger than man. His mother required Him to perform a miracle; but He, as it were, does not acknowledge his human origin³, when about to effect a divine work; as though He said, ‘To that part of me which works the miracle, thou didst not give birth.’ ‘Thou didst not give birth to my divinity; but because thou gavest birth to my infirmity, I will then acknowledge thee when that infirmity shall hang upon the cross.’ For this is the meaning of ‘Mine hour is not yet come.’ For then He, who truly had always known her, acknowledged her. And before He was born of her, He had known her in predestination; and before He, as God, created her, of whom He, as man, was created, He had known his mother; but at a certain hour, in a mystery, He does not acknowledge her; and at a certain hour, in a mystery, He again acknowledges her. He then acknowledged her, when that to which she gave birth was dying; for that was not dying by which Mary was made, but that was dying which was formed from Mary; the eternity of the Godhead died not, but the infirmity of the flesh died. He consequently makes this answer, distinguishing in the faith of the disciples

³ Viscera humana non agnoscit;

who it was that came, and by what way; for He, the God and Lord of heaven and earth, came by his mother, a woman. In that He was the Lord of the world, of the earth, and the heaven, He was Lord also of Mary; in that He was the creator of the heaven and the earth, He was the creator also of Mary: but according to what is said, 'Made of a woman, made under the Law,' He was the son of Mary, Himself the Lord of Mary, and the Son of Mary; the creator of Mary, and Himself created from Mary.

"Marvel not that He is both Son and Lord; for as of Mary, so also of David, is He called the son, and of David is He therefore called the son, because He is the son of Mary. In the same manner, then, as He is both the son and Lord of David—the son of David according to the flesh, the Son of God according to his divinity; so is He the son of Mary according to the flesh, and the Lord of Mary according to his Majesty. Therefore, because she was not the mother of his divinity, and it was by his divinity that the miracle was about to be performed, He answered, 'What have I to do with thee? But do not think that I shall deny thee as my mother; for then I will acknowledge thee when the weakness of which thou art the mother shall begin to hang upon the cross.' Let us test the truth of this. When the Lord suffered, as the same Evangelist (who had known the mother of the Lord, and who even at this marriage-feast introduced the mother of the Lord to us) himself relates,—'There was about the cross the mother of Jesus; and Jesus said to his mother, Woman, behold thy Son, and to the disciple, Behold thy mother.' He commends his mother to his disciple, He who was about to die before his mother, and to rise again before his mother's death, commends his mother; as a human being He commends to a human being, a human being: this had Mary brought forth. That hour was then already come of which at that time he had spoken, 'Mine hour is not yet come.'"

Here we cannot but advert to an essential difference constantly forcing itself on our notice, between the manner in which St. Augustine employs the fundamental truth, that the Son of God was born the Son of man of the Virgin-mother of her substance, and the turn generally given to the same truth by Roman Catholic writers. They employ that truth to exalt Mary, and to draw our minds to a contemplation of her exalted nature, and excite our praise towards her. Augustine employs the same truth to fix our thoughts on the atonement, to excite in us a lively faith in Christ alone, and to fill our hearts with thanksgiving. He is ever drawing our minds away from the means to the end, from the instrument to the agent; from the Virgin to God. Thus, "Mary believed, and what she believed was effected in her. Let us also believe, that what was effected may also be profitable to us⁴."

Thus, too, in a sermon on the Nativity he says—

"Therefore that Day, even the Word of God, the Day which shineth on angels, the Day which shineth in that country whence we are sojourners, clothed Himself with flesh and is born of a Virgin. . . . We were mortals, we were oppressed by our sins, we were bearing our own punishment. . . . Christ is born, let no one doubt to be born again; let his mercy be poured in our hearts. His mother bare Him in her womb; let us also bear Him in our heart. The Virgin was filled by the incarnation of Christ; let our hearts be filled by the faith of Christ. The Virgin brought forth the Saviour; let us also bring forth praise, let our souls be fruitful to God⁵."

But so many instances of this habitual reference from Mary to God, from her office as mother to our duty as Christ's members, present themselves throughout the works of St. Augustine, that the difficulty is not to find, but to choose; not to gather, but to se-

⁴ Vol. v. p. 951.

⁵ Vol. v. p. 890.

lect from what we have gathered; and on this immediate point we will only add one more specimen: it is from a sermon on the Nativity⁶:—

“With reason, then, did the prophets announce that He should be born; and the heavens and angels that He was born. He lay in a manger, who held the world; He was an infant, and the Word. Him whom the heavens do not contain, the bosom of one woman bare. She ruled our Ruler; she carried Him in whom we are; she gave suck to our Bread: O manifested weakness, and wondrous humility, in which the whole Divinity thus lay hid! The mother to whom in his infancy He was subject, He ruled by his power; and her whose breasts He sucked, He fed with truth. May He perfect his gifts in us, who did not abhor to take on Himself our origin! May He Himself make us the sons of God, who for our sakes willed to become Son of man.”

Although the importance of St. Augustine's testimony has induced us to dwell thus long on his works, yet we cannot anticipate the regret of any one at our closing this number with another passage in itself most animating to the Christian, and at the same time, though not so fully; nor so much in detail as other parts of his works, yet virtually presenting to us the habitual sentiments of this great master in the Christian Israel on the nature of angels, and on the part in the work of our redemption to which the Virgin Mary was called. On the words of the 149th Psalm, “He hath made them fast for ever and ever: He hath given them a law which shall not be broken:” Augustine says:—

“All heavenly things, all things above, all powers and angels, a city on high, good, holy, blessed; from which, because we are wanderers, we are yet miserable; and whither, because we are about to return, we are blessed with hope; and where, when

⁶ Vol. v. p. 882.

we shall have returned thither, we shall be blessed indeed. What precept do you think the heavenly beings and holy angels have? What precept did God give to them? What, except to praise Him? Blessed are they whose business it is to praise God! They plough not, neither do they sow; they grind not, neither do they dress food; for these are works of necessity, and no necessity is there. They steal not, they plunder not, they commit not adultery; for these are works of iniquity, and no iniquity is there. They break not bread to the hungry, they clothe not the naked, the stranger they take not in; they visit not the sick, they reconcile not the contentious, they bury not the dead; these are works of mercy, and no misery on which mercy might be shown is there. O blessed ones! Do we think we shall be thus? Ah! let us sigh and groan for it. And what are we, that we might be there? Mortals cast forth, cast away, earth and ashes. But He who promised is omnipotent. If we look to ourselves, what are we? If we look to Him, He is God, He is omnipotent. Will not He make an angel of a man, who made man of nothing? Or would God esteem man for nought, for whom He was willing that his only Son should die? Let us look to the proof of his love. We have received such an earnest of God's promise. We hold fast the death of Christ; we hold fast the blood of Christ. Who died? The only One. For whom did He die? We might have wished it had been for the good—for the just. But, what? Christ, says the Apostle, died for the ungodly. He who gave his own death for the ungodly, what does He reserve for the righteous, but his own life? Let then human weakness raise itself up; let it not despair, nor crush itself, nor turn itself away, nor say, 'I shall not be.' He who promised is God, and He came that He might promise. He appeared to man, He came to take upon Himself our death, to promise his life. He came to the country of our sojourn, to receive here what here abounds—

reproaches, scourging, smiting on the cheek, spittings in the face, revilings, a crown of thorns, hanging on the tree, the cross, death. These things abound in our country, and to this treatment He came. What did He give here? What did He receive here? He gave exhortation, He gave doctrine, He gave remission of sins: He received reproaches, the cross, and death. He brought from that country good things to us, and in our country He endured evils.

“Yet He promised us that we should be there, whence He came; and He says, ‘Father, I will that where I am, there may they also be!’ So great love went before. Because where we were, He was with us; where He is, we shall be with Him. O mortal man, what hath God promised thee? That thou shalt live for ever. Thou dost not believe! Believe, believe! What He hath done already is more than He hath promised. What has He done? He has died for thee! What has He promised? That thou shalt live with Him. It is harder to believe that the Eternal One died, than that a mortal should live for ever. We have that already which is the harder to believe. If for man’s sake God died, shall not man live with God? Shall not man live for ever, for whose sake He who is eternal died?

“But how did God die? and whence did God die? and can God die? He took FROM THEE that whence He might die for thee. He could not die except as flesh; He could not die except as a mortal body. He clothes Himself where He might die for thee; He will clothe thee where thou mayest live with Him. Where did He clothe Himself with death? In the virginity of his mother. Where will He clothe thee with life? In the equality of his Father. Here He chose for Himself A CHASTE CHAMBER, where He might be united, a bridegroom with HIS BRIDE. The Word was made flesh, that He might be the head of the Church; for the Word Himself is not part of the Church, but took upon Himself flesh that He might

be the head of the Church. Somewhat of ours is already above, namely, what He received here, where He died, and was crucified. Already have certain first-fruits of thee gone before, and dost thou doubt that thou shalt follow¹?"

The evidence of St. Augustine is clear, strong, and manifold against the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome with regard to the blessed Virgin Mary; and his testimony brings us into the second quarter of the fifth century.

¹ Vol. iv. p. 1676.

THE END.

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WHAT IS ROMANISM?

No. XVI.

ON THE
ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.
EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH
AGAINST IT.—*Concluded.*



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- XVI. ON THE ROMISH WORSHIP OF THE VIRGIN.—EVIDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST IT—*[concluded]*.

WHAT IS ROMANISM?

*Romish Worship of the Virgin.—Evidence of the
Primitive Church against it (continued).*

St. Jerome, A.D. 418¹.

IN the estimation of Roman Catholic writers, the name of Jerome—"the greatest master of the churches"—stands among the highest, if not the very highest, of the early fathers of the Christian Church. He was born in an obscure town; but as his biographer assures us, he was nourished from the cradle with the pure milk of catholic truth². He was the friend and the oracle of Pope Damasus; and by the canon law of Rome, not only are his own books received implicitly, but of the works of some other writers, those only are stamped with authority, "which the most blessed Jerome does not reject³." On the question before us, we are led to attach more than ordinary importance to his testimony, because the state and condition of the Virgin Mary as the mother of our Lord, repeatedly formed the subject both of

¹ Verona, 1734. 11 vols. fol.

² See vol. xi. p. 14.

³ See Gibert, Jur. Can. 1732, p. 12. See also Sacrosancta Conc. Paris, 1671, p. 1263.

his discussions with those whose opinions he controverted, and of his instruction to those who esteemed him as their teacher in Christian truth⁴.

And what is the character of his evidence? He speaks of Mary as a holy virgin and a holy mother, and propounds her as an example of purity to all. He says, Death came by Eve, and life by Mary; but from the first to the last page of his voluminous works, embracing every variety of theological subject, not only does no single expression occur to warrant the conclusion that Jerome looked with faith to the intercession of the Virgin, or ever invoked her aid or her prayers, but nothing meets us which would imply his knowledge that any dependence on her intercession, or any invocation of her aid, prevailed in any part of the Catholic Church in his day. No intimation is given to us of any festival instituted to her honour; we find no allusion to her immaculate conception; to the miracles attending her death, or to her assumption into heaven.

We need quote only one or two passages, to enable us to form a correct opinion of Jerome's sentiments as to the object of religious worship, and as to any invocation of the Virgin, or any trust in her mediation.

"We worship not nor adore, I do not say the relics of martyrs, but neither the sun, nor the moon, nor angels, nor archangels, nor cherubim, nor seraphim, nor any name that is named, in the present world or in the world to come, lest we serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. We honour the relics of martyrs, that we may adore Him whose martyrs they are; we honour the servants, that the honour of the servants may redound to the Lord⁵."

The Council of Trent declares that the Virgin Mary, by the special privilege of God, never was

⁴ Vol. i. p. 231, p. 120, and p. 679.

⁵ For a fuller reference to passages in the works of Jerome, bearing on the inquiry before us, we refer to the *Romish Worship of the Virgin*, p. 300, &c. Note vol. i. p. 720.

chargeable with any sin at all; and, consistently with the worship now offered her, less could scarcely have been expected. But many of the ancient teachers in the Christian school took a very different view of this point. We have already seen how St. Basil contradicts this notion, in his interpretation of Simeon's prophecy, and how St. Chrysostom agrees with him; and the words of Jerome on the same Scripture are these:—

“Simeon⁶ then says, ‘And a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also.’ What is that sword which pierced through the hearts not of others only, but also of Mary? It is plainly written, that at the time of the Passion, all the Apostles were offended; our Lord Himself also saying, ‘All ye shall be offended this night.’ Therefore, all of them together were offended; so that Peter also, the chief of the Apostles, denied him thrice. What! do we suppose, that when the Apostles were offended, the mother of our Lord was free from the offence? If she felt not offence at the passion of the Lord, Jesus did not die for her sins. But if all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, being justified by his grace and redeemed, surely Mary also was offended at that time. And this is what Simeon now prophesies, ‘Thine own soul also’—thine, who knowest that thou, being a virgin, without a husband didst bring forth—who didst hear from Gabriel, ‘The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,’ shall the sword of unbelief pierce through; and thou shalt be struck with the point of the weapon of doubt, and thy thoughts shall tear and distract thee, when thou shalt see Him whom thou hast heard to be the Son of God, and whom thou knowest to have been conceived without the seed of man, crucified and die, and be subject to human punishments, and at last lamenting with tears, and

⁶ Vol. vii. p. 300.

saying, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.'"⁷

Again, on the passage, "When the days of **THEIR** purification (so he reads it, *eorum*) were accomplished," he says "The purification of what persons? If it had been written on account of **HER** purification, that is, Mary's, who had brought forth, no question would have arisen; and we should have confidently said, that Mary, who was a mortal, needed purification after childbirth."⁸

Again, on the passage, "And they understood not this saying," Jerome's words—very obscure and doubtful on some points, but clear and decisive in the point before us—are these, "Observe this also, that as long as He was in the possession of his Father, He was above; because Joseph and Mary had not yet a full faith, therefore they could not remain above with Him, but He is said to have gone down with them."⁹

Now, whether we regard these as the sentiments of Jerome himself, or as Origen's sentiments translated by Jerome, and left without any note of disapprobation by him, it may be asked, Could these men have believed what the modern Romanists profess to be their belief, as to the Virgin Mary? Is the faith of the Church of Rome, or of the Church of England, the faith of the primitive Fathers? The dissatisfaction evinced by the Benedictine editor at "these audacious accusations" of Mary by Origen (for so he calls them), suggests the only answer—The primitive Fathers of the Christian Church did not entertain the same thoughts and the same belief, as to the Virgin Mary, which the Church of Rome now suggests, and teaches, and requires in her members. The correctness of the views of Origen or of Jerome, is not the point before us; our only question now is, what their sentiments really were.

Surely had Jerome felt that the Virgin Mary was "the

⁷ Vol. vii. p. 285.

⁸ Vol. vii. p. 309.

ground of his hope;" had he "invoked her protection and guidance;" had he been aware of such feelings or such practices prevailing among his Christian contemporaries, indications of this must have shown themselves, in some part or other of his works; but nothing of the kind is discoverable⁹.

Vincent of Lirens, 440.

Vincent, called "of Lirens" from an island, or, as Bellarmín says, from a monastery of that name, was the author of a short but celebrated work called "Commonitorium," directed against the heresies which had perverted Scripture doctrine, and disturbed the peace of Christendom. In his introductory remarks he points out with equal brevity and clearness the use of primitive tradition in our inquiries after Apostolic truth, and the faith once delivered to the saints. In this work a passage occurs which on every account deserves our serious attention. Vincent having stated that Nestorius held that there were two sons, one who was God from the Father, the other, man born of his mother; "consequently that the holy Mary is not to be called Theotocos, because, forsooth, of her was born not that Christ who was God, but that Christ who was man," thus proceeds:—

"Through this unity of person, by reason of a like miracle it was brought to pass, that the flesh of the Word growing entirely from his mother, God the Word Himself is with most truly Christian faith believed, and is with greatest impiety denied, to have been born of a virgin. This being the case, let no one attempt to defraud the holy Mary of the privileges and special glory of Divine grace. For by the singular gift of our Lord and God, her Son, she must be most truly and blessedly confessed to be Theotocos;

⁹ For the reasons which exclude a work ascribed to Basil of Seleucia from the list of the genuine remains of the early Fathers, see "Worship of the Virgin," p. 310.

not, however, in that sense Theotocos in which a certain impious heresy supposes her to be, asserting that she is only to be called Mother of God by a figure of speech, because she brought forth that man who was afterwards made God; just as we speak of the mother of a bishop or a priest, not because she gives birth to one already a bishop or priest, but by producing that man who was afterwards made priest or bishop. Not so is the holy Mary Theotocos; but for this reason rather, because in her most holy womb the mystery was effected, that by a singular and solitary unity of person, as the Word was flesh in flesh, so man is God in God."

After making this most explicit declaration of our true catholic faith¹, "that the Word, the Son of the Father, very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance;" and after reprobating with sentiments of abhorrence the rashness and impiety of those who would rob the Virgin of her lawful character and honour as the mother of that man who was very God,—how does Vincent of Lirens proceed? Had he been trained in that school which offers religious invocation to the Virgin, and prays to our heavenly Father through her mediation, and professes to honour her above angels and cherubim, and to regard her as the chief source of a Christian's hope, surely some intimations of such principles could not have failed to show themselves in this place. But nothing of the kind appears. The author does immediately pronounce blessings, and honour, and reverence; yet not the Virgin Mary, but the Church, which maintains the truth as to the person of Christ is the object of his pious admiration; he draws a comparison between what is going on in this world and the exalted duties and office of the holy angels; but it is the profession of the true faith in Christ, not the glory of the Virgin Mother of which he speaks:—

¹ Second Article of the Church of England.

“Blessed Catholic Church, which worships one God in the fulness of the Trinity, and also the equality of the Trinity in one Godhead. Blessed Church, which believes that there are two true and perfect substances in Christ, but Christ to be one person. By that (the unity of person) we confess both man to be the Son of God, and God to be the Son of the Virgin. Blessed, therefore, and worshipful, praised, and most holy, and altogether to be compared with the praise of angels above, is that confession which glorifies one Lord God in threefold holiness.”

Orosius and Sedulius.

Among the doctors approved of by the Roman Canon Law, are Orosius, whose date is about A.D. 400, and Sedulius, who lived, probably, to the year 440; we therefore refer to their works. Orosius, a Spaniard, wrote seven books on the history of Rome, in which he traces the hand of Divine Providence preparing the way for the Christian dispensation. Here he speaks of the Saviour as the Son of God and Man, the offspring of the Virgin. He wrote also a work on the freedom of the will, in framing which many opportunities would have offered themselves to him of referring to the Virgin, had he associated the idea of sinless perfection with her name. He refers to St. Paul, and St. Peter, and St. James, and Zacharias, and the Canaanitish woman, and others; but to the Virgin Mary he makes no reference at all: and he speaks of Christ as the only mediator and intercessor.

Sedulius, in his beautiful Christian poems, speaks much of the Virgin as the mother of Him who was God from eternity, and man born in this world; and he speaks of her as the person through whom the way of life was effected. But in his writings we find nothing to countenance a Christian either in addressing her in prayer, or in praying to God through her mediation.

Cyril of Alexandria, A.D. 440.

Cyril who became Bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 412, is said to have been present at Chalcedon, A.D. 403, when St. Chrysostom was deposed. By many he was called the rule or standard of sound doctrine. His writings have never had so able and thorough an examination with the view of separating the genuine from the spurious as they deserve. The Benedictines left him untouched; and a work attributed to him, but which carries with it its own condemnation as the corrupt version of a rhapsody composed long after this Cyril's time, is at the present day appealed to in support of the worship of the Virgin².

It is not necessary that we should acquiesce in all the interpretations of Scripture adopted by this truly evangelical and apostolic man, in order to feel sentiments of admiration and gratitude for his example in one essential point; we mean his habitual reference to holy Scripture in support of whatever he advances as to doctrine or practice. It is indeed cheering and animating to witness in him so steady and constant an appeal to the word of God. "Our hope is all in Christ," is the golden sentiment with which he closes his treatise on the Right Faith³; and the same principle seems to have filled his whole soul and guided his life. The thoughts of his heart appear to have revolved round God in Christ as their centre; the incarnate Word is all in all to him: he shows that he needed no other mediator than Jesus Christ; he looked for no other intercessor in the unseen world. In his genuine works we have much satisfactory proof that he neither invoked the Virgin Mary, nor prayed to God through her mediation.

The subject which mainly occupied his thoughts compelled him to refer constantly to the blessed Vir-

² Paris, 1633. See "*Romish Worship of the Virgin*," p. 348, &c.

³ Vol. vi. p. 180.

gin. His mind seems to have been absorbed in the duty of establishing the true doctrine then assailed from opposite quarters, that the blessed fruit of her womb, the Lord Jesus Christ, was perfect God and perfect man. In his references he speaks of her always with respect and reverence as the mysterious Virgin Mother. He tells us that East and West confessed Mary to be Theotocós⁴, "parent of Him who was God." He calls her generally the Holy Virgin; but he speaks as though her office was discharged when she had given birth to the Redeemer.

Many of Cyril's sentiments assure us that he thought and spoke of the Virgin Mary as we of the Church of England now do; though some of his expressions would seem to sink below that reverential feeling which our language generally implies.

Cyril's comment on the miracle at Cana⁵ of Galilee is full of interest; and his reflections on the act of our Lord in consigning his mother to the care of St. John deserve a careful perusal throughout, as containing important evidence on the subject of our inquiry. We need, however, cite only a few extracts from the latter, of the genuineness of which no doubt can be entertained:—

"The divine Evangelist introduces as standing by the cross his mother, and with her the other women, evidently weeping; for the female race is, we know, much given to tears. What induced him to dwell on such minute points as to specify the tarrying of the women there? His object was to teach us this:—that, as was probable, the unexpected suffering of our blessed Lord gave offence to his very mother; and the death upon the cross being very bitter, and besides this the mocking of the Jews, and the soldiers probably watching him at the very cross, and laughing to scorn Him who hung upon it, and in the very sight of his mother daring to divide his garments,

⁴ Vol. vi. p. 30.

⁵ Vol. iv. p. 135; vol. iv. p. 1064.

threw her somewhat off from the reasoning which became her. For doubt not that she admitted some such musings as these—"I gave birth to Him who is now laughed to scorn upon the cross; but when He said He was the true Son of Almighty God, perhaps He was deceived. How could He who said, 'I am the life,' be crucified? How could He be seized and bound by the cords of his murderers? Why did He not master the designs of his persecutors? Why does not He come down from the cross, who commanded Lazarus to return to life, and astonished all Judea with his miracles?"

"It is exceedingly probable that the female mind, (*τὸ γυναικίον*), not knowing the mystery, should slip into some such reasonings as these. We may well believe that the nature of those events was dreadful enough to turn from its course even the most sober mind; and it is nothing marvellous if a woman was made to stumble into this state. For if the chief of THE BLESSED DISCIPLES himself, Peter, once was offended when Christ spoke and taught plainly that He was to be delivered into the hands of sinners, and to suffer the cross and death, so that he hastily exclaimed, 'That be far from Thee, O Lord,' what wonder if THE DELICATE MIND OF A WOMAN should be hurried into weaker views? And this we say, not vainly forming conjectures, as some may think, but drawn into our suspicion concerning the mother of our Lord from what is written. For we remember that Simeon the Just when he took our Lord, then a babe, into his arms, as it is written, gave thanks and said, 'Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' And to the holy Virgin herself he said, 'Lo, this one is set for the fall and rising

⁶ The reader will bear in mind, that Cyril here only takes the same view which Tertullian, Origen, Basil, Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzen, Ambrose, Jerome, and others, took before him, of the Virgin's faltering at the cross.

again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against: Yea, a sword shall pass through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.' By the sword he meant the sharp attack of the Passion, which distracted the female mind into reasonings which were out of place; for temptations try the hearts of those who suffer, and lay bare the surmisings which are in them."

Having then beautifully referred to the act of our blessed Saviour, in committing his beloved mother to the care of his beloved Apostle, as an example of that "honour to parents which is the most precious form of virtue," he adds these sentiments:

"How could it be otherwise than becoming for the Lord to take provident care of his own mother, when she had fallen so as to feel offence, and was confounded by disordered thoughts? for being the true God, and looking into the motions of the heart, and knowing what was in its depth, how could He but know the thoughts which at that time especially disturbed her at the honoured cross? Knowing, therefore, the reasonings which were in her, He delivered her to the disciple who was the best instructor in mysteries, and who was able well and not inadequately to explain the mystery; for he was a wise man and a divine, who both receives her and takes her away rejoicing, intending to fulfil the whole desire of the Saviour concerning her."

Here Cyril of Alexandria tells us that the Virgin Mary was astounded at the unexpected sufferings and death of her Son, and was unable to reconcile what she then saw with what He had told her of his divine nature; but that we must not wonder at such weakness and stumbling in her, since even Peter himself had felt somewhat of the same disappointment. Here he tells us, that when our Saviour saw the disturbed state of his mother's mind, arising from her ignorance of the divine dispensation, He mercifully intrusted her to St. John, a theologian profoundly acquair

with the divine will, and able to explain to her the whole mystery of Christ's passion.

With the soundness of Cyril's views, in our present inquiry, we have nothing to do; but is it possible to read these passages and not infer that Cyril was very far indeed from entertaining those sentiments concerning the perfection of the Virgin which were afterwards propagated, and are still professed by the Church of Rome? Can any other conclusion be drawn from his argument in another homily, delivered to a very crowded audience, in which he speaks in such a manner of the prophecy of Simeon addressed to Mary, as to leave no doubt that he ranked her, both in faith and in knowledge, below the Apostles? "A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also: ' by the 'sword' meaning perhaps the pain which she felt on account of Christ, when she saw Him crucified to whom she had given birth, NOT AT ALL KNOWING that He was stronger than death, and would rise again from the dead. And do not wonder at all if THE VIRGIN is ignorant on a point on which we shall find EVEN THE HOLY APOSTLES themselves to have been of little faith'."

We will only add one of many passages which stand in striking contrast with those representations of later times, and which we find even in the authorized services of the Roman Church, and which abound in the works of her divines and the books of devotion generally circulated; those representations, namely, in which the Virgin is magnified as a being of such surpassing perfections, that far above all created beings, principalities, and powers in heavenly places; far above all prophets and apostles, angels and cherubim; she stands next to the Trinity, to be approached by a worship peculiarly her own.

Having quoted St. Paul, as applying to Christ the title of the Lord of Glory, and as representing

him to be better than the angels, Cyril thus speaks⁸:

"Now to be and to be called the Lord of Glory, how is this otherwise than exceeding great, and surpassing every thing created or brought to its birth. I pass by mortal things, for they are very small; but I say that if any one should name angels, and enumerate the principalities, and thrones, and dominions, and mention also the highest seraphim, he would confess that these fall far short of his exceeding glory."

Repeatedly does Cyril of Alexandria thus enumerate all things held in the highest honour by the faithful; but neither above the highest of created beings, nor among the highest, does he ever mention the Virgin Mary.

Isidore of Pelusium, A.D. 450⁹.

Isidore, called "of Pelusium," from the mountain of that name near one of the mouths of the Nile, where the convent stood of which he was the abbot, was a disciple of St. Chrysostom, and was renowned as a philosopher, a rhetorician, and a divine. His works consist almost entirely of epistles to various persons on subjects chiefly in immediate connexion with the faith and life of Christians. Between two and three thousand of those letters have escaped the ravages of time; and it is said they once amounted to ten thousand. In the remains of this Christian, there are many interesting and beautiful portions, which no believer can carefully read without profit. With regard to his evidence on the worship of the Virgin, we need say but few words.

Throughout the long series of his letters, the name of Mary is scarcely found at all; and the passages are very few which refer to her as the mother of our Lord. The following are the only sentences which

⁸ Vol. v. p. 697.

⁹ Paris, 1638.

seem to bear sufficiently on our subject to justify the citation of them; and the reader will immediately see how far they are from indicating the existence of such religious sentiments and practices as our Roman Catholic brethren now profess and maintain:

“‘I am not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,’ said the Lord to the Canaanitish woman, desiring to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, having taken upon Him his seed, and having chosen a mother from it, and in her and of her having been made flesh and become man, in all things like ourselves, sin only except¹.”

“The holy volume of the Gospels bringing down the genealogy to Joseph, who drew his relationship from David, sufficed to show through him that the Virgin also was of the same tribe with David, since the Divine Law directed marriages to be made between persons of the same tribe².”

“You ask, ‘What more extravagant tenet, or what doctrine different from ours do the deceived and polytheistic Greeks maintain when they write of the mother of the Gods; whereas we also believe in a mother of God?’ The Greeks acknowledge that the mother of their gods, even of the highest, both conceived and brought forth from incontinence, and passions which may not be named. . . . But her whom we confess to be the mother of our God incarnate, all generations acknowledge to have conceived one Son, in one solitary way, without seed and without corruption.” Having described the sufferings of our Saviour, he proceeds: “His resurrection proved Him to be a suffering incarnate Deity, and that she who brought Him forth was the mother of an incarnate Deity³.”

In another letter, Isidore says, “Let nothing be suffered to become an impediment to the Gospel of our Lord, and let no distraction of mind attend

¹ Book i. Ep. 121.

² Book i. Ep. 7.

³ Ep. 54. Ep. 159.

spiritual instruction; nor let the intervention of any disturbance interrupt useful discussion: for neither did Christ when He was sought for by his mother and his brethren, pay any attention to their call, when He had begun his instruction, and was attending to the salvation of his hearers; showing that spiritual things should be held in higher estimation than carnal."

The evidence of Isidore brings us to the middle of the fifth century.

Theodoret, A.D. 457⁴.

Theodoret was born at Antioch, about A.D. 386. He was educated near his native place, and continued to live there till he became Bishop of Cyrus, in Syria, at the age of thirty-six. At Ephesus he was deprived of that bishopric, but was restored to it at Chalcedon, after he had solemnly declared himself a firm adherent to the Catholic faith.

It is impossible to read the works of Theodoret without finding evidence of the lamentable extent to which superstition had then shot forth its roots and branches, and encumbered the garden of the Lord. In his writings, indisputable proofs present themselves that in his time Christians, in their zeal to convert their heathen neighbours to the religion of the Cross, conceded to them the adoption of saints and martyrs to take the place of their fabled divinities of the lower ranks; and those saints and martyrs who shed their blood, rather than renounce their allegiance to the one only God, and their faith in the one only Mediator, were themselves made the substitutes of the household deities of paganism, and of the tutelary gods of the fields, and woods, and mountains, and seas, and winds, and storms⁵. To this delusive and fatal principle of accommodating Christianity to the prejudices

⁴ Halle, 1769.

⁵ Some divines of great authority are disposed to think, that the Christians here adverted to did not act upon the principle of accommodation, but had themselves been led into the practices, which they recommended to others, by the natural tendency of the human mind to superstition. The evidence of Theodoret on the question before us is not affected by either of these theories.

of the pagan world, and the tendencies of corrupt human nature, Christendom may ascribe, with tears of sorrow, a large and fearful share of those superstitious tenets and practices, which in times past well nigh buried primitive faith and apostolic worship. Theodoret tells us, that the adoption of that principle gave great offence to the more enlightened among his heathen contemporaries.

But gigantic and rapid as were the strides which the corruption of the truth had even then taken, and strange as it must appear to those who have not examined the question historically, and traced the gradual growth of these superstitions from their first germ to their full magnitude, yet the fact is demonstrable, that the worship of the Virgin Mary came not into existence till long after the invocation of the martyrs had made its inroads on the integrity of Christian worship. In the time of Theodoret, the Church is proved to have been kept in the primitive faith, still free from the worship of the Virgin Mary, and from the innovation of addressing God in prayer through her mediation.

The subject which more than any other seems to have engaged the thoughts of Theodoret, was the perfect union in our blessed Saviour of the Divine and human nature. Disputes connected with this doctrine too long banished peace from the kingdom of the Prince of Peace on earth. These disputes of necessity involved at every turn an inquiry into the office sustained by the Virgin Mary herself, in the mystery of the Incarnation. One question in Theodoret's time was, whether the title, "She who brought forth God⁶," as well as the title, "She who brought forth a man⁷," could be properly applied to her. Never did any theological controversy give more ample room for the full profession of whatever sentiments of reverence and religion were entertained towards her; and yet we find that the thoughts of Christians were then fixed, not on the superior ex-

⁶ Theotocos.

⁷ Anthropotocos.

excellence of the Virgin herself, but on the nature of her office in giving birth to the Saviour. The question was, not whether the Virgin was the proper object of religious worship, but whether that fruit of her womb which the angel pronounced to be the Son of the Highest, and to have David for his father; Jesus, born of her in Bethlehem, though one Christ, was very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, and very man of her substance.

There are many passages in Theodoret, all leading to the same conclusion, that in his view Mary was a holy and blessed virgin, ever to be held in reverence and honour as the mother and the handmaid of the Lord. But in his writings, we find no trace whatever of any invocation of her; we meet with no application to herself to exert her interest with God; nor any supplication to God to allow the mediation of the Virgin to prevail with Him for mercy. He seems moreover to intimate that persons in his time were beginning, in elucidation of the mystery of the incarnation, to apply to her titles which had not before been ascribed to her.

In Theodoret will be found many passages, which lay before us with much clearness the true doctrine of the Incarnation, and the general views and feelings of himself and his contemporaries on the subject immediately before us; but we must content ourselves with one or two passages.

“The natures were not confused, but remained in their integrity. If we thus view the subject we shall see the harmony of the Evangelists: for concerning that only-begotten, the Lord Christ, one proclaims what belongs to the Godhead, another what belongs to the manhood; and the Lord Christ Himself teaches us to take this same view, calling Himself at one time the Son of God, at another the Son of Man; and at one time He honours his mother as her who gave Him birth, at another as her Lord He chides her.”

⁸ Vol. iv. p. 105.

"If we declare Christ to be God and Man, who is so foolish as to shun the word 'She who gave birth to the Man,' in conjunction with 'She who gave birth to God?' for in the case of the Lord Christ we employ both appellations; wherefore the Virgin is honoured and called 'highly favoured.' What sensible person would refuse to apply names derived from the Saviour's names to the Virgin, who through Him is held in honour by the faithful? for it is not that He who sprang from her derives his dignity from her, but she through Him who was born of her is adorned with the highest appellations. If Christ be only God, let the Virgin be called and named Theotocos, as having given birth to Him who by nature is God. But if Christ is both God and man, and the one nature was always (for He never began to exist, being co-eternal with the Father), and the other in these last days sprang from human nature, let him who wishes TO STATE DOCTRINES, combine the Virgin's appellations from both these views. . . . But if any one is desirous of speaking in the panegyric form, and to weave hymns and compose praises, and wishes, at all events, to employ the more dignified appellations, NOT STATING DOCTRINES BUT PANEGYRIZING, and to the utmost holding up to admiration the greatness of the mystery, let him enjoy his bent, and employ the high titles, and praise, and admire: we find many such things among orthodox teachers. But every where let moderation be highly regarded."

It is to be observed that Theodoret is here checking the rising tendency to employ, when speaking of the Virgin, the more honourable titles, to the exclusion of the less distinguishing appellations; and that while he urges the Christian teacher, when stating doctrines, to speak the whole truth, and to refer to the Virgin as

* Vol. iv. p. 1303. In "The Romish Worship of the Virgin," the reader will find many more extracts from Theodoret, confirmatory of the views of his doctrine here given.

the mother of the Man, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, as well as the mother of Him who was God, he expressly gives to the poet and panegyrist, when not strictly teaching Christian doctrine, a greater latitude; but even then not to exalt the Virgin, but to extol the mystery. We have often traced the error of the worship of the Virgin (or rather the invocation of Saints in general) in its origin mainly to the enthusiastic and unchastened language of popular harangues, and the poetical effusions of the panegyrist. To this error Theodoret gives no countenance.

His testimony brings us within the latter half of the fifth century.

*Prosper, A.D. 460*¹⁰.

Contemporary with Isidore of Pelusium, and Theodoret, though a few years younger, was Prosper, of Aquitaine, who died about A.D. 463, and whom the Roman canon law honours as a very religious man. To this character of Prosper we shall all cordially add our testimony, as far as the mind and heart of an author are discernible by a fellow mortal through his writings. His reference of all that we have of spiritual good to the grace of Christ alone; his steady constant fixing of the eye of faith on our blessed Saviour; his entire renunciation of all human merits; the pure love of high and unaffected piety manifesting itself throughout; his strong and warm-hearted exhortation to a persevering study of Holy Scripture; these, with his many other excellences, recommend him much to every true Christian. His annotations on the Psalms, from the hundredth to the last, are in themselves very beautiful, and have a truly spiritual and evangelical tone pervading them; and few will not regret that we have not the same pious man's assistance in our interpretation and Christian application of the larger

¹⁰ Paris, 1711 and 1730.

portion of that holy book. In the remains of this witness to the truth, we seek in vain for any intimation of his hope resting elsewhere than in God alone. He bids us proceed boldly to the throne of Grace, trusting in the Saviour's atoning blood, renouncing all our own good deeds, pleading only for mercy through his merits, and hoping to be heard only through his mediation.

We find no passage in which Prosper alludes to the Virgin as an object of religious worship, or a source of the Christian's hope: he speaks of Christ as the offspring of the unspotted Virgin; and of her he says no more. We need not multiply proofs of this religious man's sentiments. In many places he cheers us with such sentiments as these¹:

"The confidence of those who hope is in God's mercy. Let no one fear because of his iniquities, when he would approach God the Lord; only let him give up himself with his whole heart, and cease from willing and from doing what must displease even himself. Let him not say, that such and such a sin may be perhaps forgiven; and another, from its very nature, must be punished; but let him cry out from the depths, and let him hope from the morning watch even until night; because his Redeemer, who is without sin, for this very reason shed his blood for the unjust, that He might blot out all the sins of all who believe in Him."

Prosper was a disciple of St. Augustine, and secretary to Pope Leo. He was not taken to the rest which awaits the people of God till about A.D. 463.

Leo, A.D. 461².

Leo, the first pope of that name, and a canonized saint of the Church of Rome, was advanced to the popedom A.D. 440, and having governed that Church for 21 years, died A.D. 461.

¹ See Ps. cxl. cxli. cxxix.

² Venice, 1753.

Few saints in the Roman calendar are spoken of with so much reverence as Leo. He is often represented as equal to the Apostles; and with so great authority are his works invested, that A.D. 494 Pope Gelasius, and a council at Rome of seventy bishops, who were assembled chiefly to determine what books should be held to be canonical, and what apocryphal, what should be sanctioned, and what prohibited³, having numbered Pope Leo's letter, written A.D. 449, to Flavian, bishop of Constantinople, among the books to be sanctioned, add these words, "The text of which if any one shall dispute, even to a single iota, and shall not receive it in all things with reverence, let him be accursed."

The evidence of such a man must be looked to with interest, and the result of our researches is most satisfactory. The genuine writings of Leo (his Roman editors themselves being judges of their genuineness) supply no indication whatever of Leo either praying to the Virgin himself, even for her intercession, or of being cognizant of any practice of the kind in the Church over which he so long presided. Two⁴ homilies there are ascribed to Leo, said to have been delivered by him on the Feast of the Annunciation, which present very different views. These, however, are pronounced unhesitatingly by the Roman editor to be beyond question spurious; and we need not refer to them again. Nevertheless, it may be worthy of remark, that this is another instance of those homilies being proved to be spurious, which profess to have been delivered on the Feast of the Annunciation, before the beginning of the sixth century; and also of spurious works abounding with marks of the Virgin's worship from which the genuine works of the writers to whom these spurious works are ascribed, through the first five centuries, are entirely free.

³ So early in the Church of Rome did the system of establishing an Index Expurgatorius begin.

⁴ Vol. i. pp. 384 and 438.

Among the genuine works of Leo we have more than ninety discourses or homilies, and upwards of one hundred and seventy epistles, addressed to various individuals, or bodies of men, and embracing every variety of subject connected with the doctrine and worship, the principles and practice, of Churches and of private Christians. Of Leo's discourses ten were delivered on our Lord's Nativity, in every page of which had he believed and acted as his successors now believe and act, he would have been irresistibly led to give utterance to his feelings of devotion towards the Virgin. But Leo's thoughts were fixed on the Saviour Himself, and his heart was full of gratitude and adoring love to God; not on the blessed daughter of Eve, the root of Jesse (as he calls the Virgin), the mother of Him who was God and man. On the union of the Divine and human nature in one person never to be divided, Jesus Christ, God and man, Son both of God and man, Leo is continually speaking clearly and powerfully; so he does on the virgin-purity of Mary who brought forth the Saviour by wondrous birth. But throughout his sermons, and throughout his epistles, not one word is found leading us to infer that he offered religious praises to the Virgin, or invoked her name, or looked to her for any benefits, or supplicated her for her intercession. He is constantly exhorting his hearers and his brethren to join him in prayer; but God alone, through Christ alone, is the object of that prayer.

In Pope Leo we seek in vain for any expression to justify the present⁵ Pope's profession of confidence in the Virgin's guidance, illumination, and protection. Here is no appeal to the faithful, "That all may have a successful and happy issue, let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary, who alone destroys heresies, who is our greatest hope, yea, the entire ground of our hope." Leo directed his hearers

⁵ Pope Gregory XVI. died after these pages were in the press, A.D. 1846.

to God alone as the destroyer of the enemies of the truth ; as the Christian's greatest and only hope ; as the dispenser Himself of every blessing to those who approached Him in faithful prayer by his blessed Son ; as Himself ready to "send down an efficacious blessing on the desires, and plans, and proceedings of his servants, and to make his ministers to be as a wall against the invasion of false doctrine." In every one of these particulars Leo's primitive doctrine and practice stand in direct and marked contrast with the sentiments of the present pontiff. Almost every discourse will supply an example of this in some one point or other. Pope Leo knew nothing of the Assumption of the Virgin ; for the legend had not then been framed ; but he does again and again invite his fellow-sinners and fellow-believers to rejoice on the most solemn festival of our blessed Saviour's Incarnation.

POPE GREGORY XVI. A.D. 1833.

1. We select for the date of our letter this most joyful day, in which we celebrate the most solemn festival of the most blessed Virgin's triumph and assumption into heaven.

2. That she who has been through every great calamity our patroness and protectress,

3. May watch over us writing to you, and lead our mind by her heavenly influence to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock.

POPE LEO, A.D. 440.

1. Our Saviour, dearly beloved, was born to-day ; let us rejoice. There is no room for sadness. No one is cut off from partaking of this joy : all have one common cause for rejoicing, because our Lord, the destroyer of sin and death, as He found no one free from guilt, so came to set all free. Let the saint rejoice, because he approaches the palm of victory. Let the sinner rejoice, because he is invited to pardon. Let the Gentile be instructed, because he is called to life (p. 64).

2. God Almighty succouring us through all (p. 162).

3. I beseech you, by the mercies of God, assist me by your prayers, that the Holy Spirit may remain in me, and your judgment may not be unstable. To this our exhortation the grace of God is at hand, and gives suc-

B

4. But that all may have a successful issue, let us raise our eyes to the most blessed Virgin Mary,

5. Who alone destroys all heresies;

6. Who is our greatest hope; yea, the entire ground of our hope.

7. May she exert her patronage to draw down an efficacious blessing on our desires, our plans, and proceedings, in the present straitened condition of the Lord's flock.

our, which [5] by revealing the truth through the world, has destroyed the enemies of Christ's incarnation, and death, and resurrection; so that the faithful in all the world, agreeing with the authority of the Apostolic faith, may rejoice in one joy with ourselves (p. 258).

4. Let us then fly to the mercy of God, which is every where present (p. 166). That your kindness to me may secure its intended fruit, do you supplicantly implore the most merciful clemency of our God, that he would in our days put [5] to flight those who oppose themselves to us [7]; would fortify our faith, increase our love, increase our peace, and vouchsafe to make me his poor servant, (whom to show the riches of his grace, He willed to preside at the helm of his Church,) sufficient for so great a work and useful to your edification, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6 and 7. The Grace of God, as we hope, will be present; and will enable us, by your prayers, to perform what we have undertaken (p. 242).

In Pope Leo we find evidence of implicit trust in God; no confidence in man's merit; but a full and thankful acknowledgment of the salvation obtained by the death of Christ, and made effectual to us by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to be obtained by the earnest prayer of a faithful and obedient Christian. We find indications indeed of some rising errors which were unhappily soon to invade the integrity of primitive faith; still with Leo, God in Christ is all in all.

In the following, the closing words of his second ser-

mon. on the Nativity, he speaks of the purity of the Virgin, and of the birth of Christ as an article of a Christian's creed; but nothing approaching to invocation of her, or confidence in her merits, or hope in her intercession can be found:—

“Praise the Lord, well-beloved, in all his works and judgments. Let there be in you a belief without doubt of the Virgin-purity, and of the Nativity. With holy and sincere devotedness honour the sacred and divine mystery of the Restoration of man. Embrace Christ born in our flesh, that you may be accounted worthy to see Him as the same God of glory reigning in majesty, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit remaineth in the unity of the Godhead for ever and ever.”

Pope Leo's testimony brings us far into the third part of the fifth century.

While Pope Leo presided at Rome, was held that celebrated council at Chalcedon, A.D. 451, in which the errors of Eutyches were condemned, and the orthodox faith in the article of the Incarnation of the Son of God was established. The grand question then agitated was this,—whether by the Incarnation our blessed Saviour possessed two natures, the divine and human. Subordinate to this, and necessary for its decision, was involved the question, What part of his nature, if any, Christ derived from the Virgin Mary? Again and again does this question bring the name, the office, the circumstances, and the nature of that “blissful maid,” the holy and blessed mother of our Lord, before this council, and before those of Constantinople, and Ephesus; all the proceedings at both of which were rehearsed at Chalcedon at length. Throughout these proceedings the name of Mary is continually in the mouth of the accusers and the accused, of the judges and the witnesses, and had Christian pastors then entertained the same feelings of devotion towards her—had they professed the same belief as to her as—

sumption into heaven, and her influence and authority in directing the destinies of man, and in protecting the Church on earth—had they habitually appealed to her with the same prayers for her intercession and good offices, and placed the same confidence in her as we find now exhibited even in the authorized services of the Romish Ritual; it is impossible to conceive that no signs, no intimation, no shadow, not the slightest reference to such views and feelings should either directly or incidentally have shown themselves some where or other, among the manifold and protracted proceedings of these three councils. A diligent search has been made with the single desire of ascertaining how this matter really stands; and no expression can be found, on the part of the orthodox present at that famous council, with regard to the Virgin's nature and office, or with regard to our feelings and conduct towards her, in which a member of the Church of England would not heartily acquiesce. No sentiment can be discovered implying invocation, or religious worship of any kind, or in any degree, directed towards her; no allusion to her assumption is found there. The Council of Chalcedon was held at least four centuries after the date of that pretended assumption.

⁶ Between the death of Leo and the elevation of Gelasius to the see of Rome about thirty years elapsed. The intervening prelates in the imperial city left few literary works behind them; nor does any author of note appear to have flourished in any part of Christendom during this interval. These pontiffs of Rome were Hilarus, A.D. 461, Simplicius, A.D. 467, and Felix, A.D. 483.

Hilarus speaks of "the grace of God," and "the inspiration of the Lord Jesus Christ," as the source of mercies; and in his time the council held at Venice speaks of "the Confession of faith in the holy Trinity,"

⁶ Sacrosancta Concilia, Paris, 1621. The pages in this edition are confused, but generally the references will be easily found.

and of a rising superstition called "The Lots of the Saints;" but of the Virgin Mary we read nothing.

In the Letters of Simplicius and of his correspondents we find continual reference to God's mercy as the fountain of hope and blessings; to Christ as the salvation of the emperor and the strength of his realm; and to the mercy of Christ as that power which wards off evil, and is the protector of the faithful. But throughout there is no mention of the Virgin Mary, nor of her influence or mediation⁷.

In the remains of Felix, though many indications of superstition show themselves, yet no allusion whatever is made to the mediation or intercession, the patronage, power, or influence of the Virgin Mary. The Roman synod held under him refers to God's power in conquering enemies, and to divine grace; but not the shadow of an intimation is there given that we can obtain that grace by the mediation of the Virgin. In his letter of admonition and reproof to Peter, bishop of Antioch, called the Fuller, warning him against the error of representing the divinity of Christ as suffering, Felix dwells at some length on the Incarnation of Christ; and he there speaks of the holy purity of the Virgin's womb when Christ was born of a woman. But he does not mention the name of Mary; and he applies the prophetic psalm, "Look down from heaven, behold and visit this vine," not as others have done, to the Virgin, but to "the saving Incarnation of the Word."

Felix died A. D. 492.

Gelasius, A. D. 496⁸.

Gelasius, by birth an African, held that synod of seventy bishops, which is usually called the First Roman Council. In this council, the celebrated decree was passed, to which we have already adverted, classing the works then known, comparatively few in num-

⁷ See pp. 1154. 1042. 1057. 1073. 1074. 1059. 1061.

⁸ *Sacrosancta Concilia*, p. 1263.

ber, under the two heads of approved and forbidden works. This Pope devoted himself much to the temporal advancement of the see of Rome, and to the promotion of its influence and authority over the rest of the world. In a letter^a addressed to Laurentius, a bishop of Greece, who seems to have solicited his interference, Gelasius prescribes a rule of faith to which he desired all to conform. In this confession his reference to the Virgin Mary is couched in these terms:—

“We confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God before all ages, without beginning, of the Father, as touching his Godhead, in these last times was incarnate, and became perfect man, of the most holy Virgin Mary, possessed of a rational soul, and taking a body; of the same substance with the Father as touching his Godhead, and of the same substance with us as touching his manhood. Christ brought not his body from heaven, but received it from our substance, that is, from the Virgin.”

In his striking dissertation on original sin, and the universal taint and infection of guilt, it is impossible that Gelasius could have omitted all mention of the Virgin, had the Church of Rome, of which he was Pope, then held the Virgin's total immunity from sin, as the present Church of Rome does. We are not here referring to the doctrine of her own immaculate conception in her mother's womb (that is so recent an invention, that even St. Bernard, in the twelfth century, reproves the monks of Lyons for giving any encouragement to such a novelty), but to an immaculate personal and divine purity in herself, such as the authorized services of the Church of Rome, and the devotions of her canonized saints, now set forth. There is much sound and healthful teaching in the scanty remains of this bishop, and on the point immediately before us, the following sentiments seem worthy of our notice and admiration. Having reprobated the fundamental error of those who held

^a P. 1163.

that man, by his own strength and exertion, can, in this life, reach a state of spiritual and moral perfection, Gelasius thus proceeds¹⁰ :—

“ But should any one assert, that, not by the possibility of human strength, but by divine grace, such a state may, in this life, be conferred on a holy man, he surely does right to entertain that opinion with confidence, and with faith to cherish that hope. But whether any such have existed, who have ever reached to this perfection of the present life, as it is no where plainly asserted, so does it become us neither readily to affirm, nor to deny it. The more sober course is from the words of the holy Prophets and Apostles themselves (THAN WHOM, in truth, in this world, as far as concerns the course of a holy life, NOTHING EVER WAS OR IS MORE EXCELLENT) to determine to what extent we ought to measure our progress in this life. These, although by a more abundant gift of God they were assailed by very rare or very small failings of human nature, and by a fuller affluence of God’s grace, they easily overcame the vices of mortality, yet themselves testify that they were not wholly free from them; so that it BELONGS ALONE to that immaculate Lamb, to have no sin at all; otherwise that might not seem to be imputed to Him alone, if ANY holy one besides should be thought free from sin. Let us, then, be content with the confession of the saints, and let us rather hear whatever they affirm concerning themselves, than pursue what may be either rashly entertained in our thoughts, or blown about by our own opinions.”

Could such sentiments, without any exception or modification, with respect to the Virgin, have been written by Gelasius, if she had been habitually an object of his contemplation, as a mortal without sin? Both Gelasius and Leo speak of Christ as having found no one mortal without sin, when He came to redeem all; no exception whatever being made in favour of the Virgin Mary.

¹⁰ P. 1240.

¶ In a letter to Rusticus, bishop of Lyons, having spoken of the storms of evil which pressed him, and the trials of affliction by which he was overwhelmed, Gelasius, like his predecessor Leo, and unlike his successor, Gregory, in the present day, makes no mention of the Virgin, her power and influence, her intercession, her guidance and watchful care: his heart, as far as language can be relied upon as an index of the heart, speaks only of God.

"But we faint not, and amidst so many pressures, neither does my mind sink, nor my zeal slacken, nor does fear cast me down; but though in straits and perplexities, we place our confidence in Him who, with the temptation, will provide a way for escape; and who, though for a time He will allow us to be depressed, yet will not suffer us to be overwhelmed¹."

This letter was written A.D. 494, after which Gelasius held the second Roman council; A.D. 495, and in the November of the next year he died. This brings us within four years of the close of the first five hundred years from the birth of Christ. Certainly, in Gelasius, the bishop and pope of Rome, we see not the shadow of any worship of the Virgin at all; nothing, with regard to her, in faith or practice, corresponding with the present belief and practice of the Church of Rome, either as held and exemplified in himself, or as existing, to his knowledge, in any part of the Church of Christ in his time.

Anastartus and Symmachus.

Gelasius was succeeded by Anastasius II.; and Anastasius, who presided over the Roman Church a few days short of two years, was followed by Symmachus, whose life extended fourteen years beyond the period to which our present investigation is limited.

¶ In the scanty remains of these two popes, not one single expression occurs from which we could infer that the invocation of the Virgin Mary, or any faith

¹ P. 1259.

in her merits and influence was known to them ; yet when speaking of the divine and human nature of our Lord, they would have found abundant room for references to her heavenly influence, had the habitual associations of their minds led that way. Such references were continually made in after ages. Invariably, however, these pontiffs refer to God alone, the first and immediate Giver of every good gift ; and “their chief hope, yea, the entire ground of their hope,” the hope of themselves and of their correspondents, is not in the Virgin but in Christ. Instead of declaring her to be “the sole destroyer of heresies,” they hope in God that He will defend his truth, by his own mighty power, and silence the oppositions, and upbraidings, and corruptions of its enemies.

Anastasius, in his letter of gratulation to Clovis, king of the French, who had just professed Christianity, and had been baptized in the true faith, referring the king’s spiritual birth to God, as the worker of it, thus admonishes him :

“Therefore, glorious and illustrious son, give joy to thy mother [the Church], and be to her a pillar of iron ; for the love of many is waxing cold, and by the cunning of evil men, our barque is tossed by the billows, and beaten by the foaming waves. But we hope, for hope and against hope, and praise the Lord who hath rescued thee from the power of darkness, and hath provided for the Church so great a prince, who may be able to defend it, and to put on the helmet of salvation against the invading attempts of the baneful. Go on then, beloved son, that God Almighty may preserve thy peace and kingdom with his heavenly protection, and give his angels charge to keep thee in all his ways, and give to thee victory over thy enemies round about.”

In the letter of Anastasius to his namesake Anastasius the emperor, we are struck by his continual recurrence to the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, for authority in support of his positions.

Symmachus, in his letter of defence against the Emperor Anastasius, who had been excommunicated, thus speaks of Christ's divine and human nature :

"Christ is truly wholly God and wholly man; so was He conceived, so lived in the world, so suffered, so descended into hell, so was raised again, so appeared with his disciples, so was He exalted into heaven, and so is it said that He will come again, and so is He at this day in heaven²."

To the bishops of Africa, Symmachus caused this to be written, (there is a doubt whether he wrote it himself, or employed a deacon as his amanuensis,) "God will happily accomplish the rewards of your confession, when it shall please Him to restore rest to the Churches; that by the sweetness of peace He may console us for the sorrow which adversity brought upon us."

"Is this done," he says, "from the love of life, or from the love of souls, in imitation of their first Shepherd, our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, OUR HOPE, who laid down his life for the sheep³?"

To Cæsarius, writing on the restoration of peace to the Church, he says: "And if, by the help of God, the risen controversy be stayed, let us ascribe that to his merits⁴."

Thus we find that the bishops of Rome itself up to the close of the fifth century, who, (as we learn from their own representation,) in respect to the difficulties in which they found themselves and their Church, were similarly circumstanced with the present reigning pontiff, instead of "lifting their eyes to the Virgin Mary as their hope, as the destroyer of heresies, as the guide and preserver of the Lord's ministers," spoke only of God as the author of truth, and peace, and wisdom, and safety; and looked for temporal and spiritual blessings to Him alone, through the merits and mediation only of his eternal Son, without the intervention of any

² P. 1297.

³ P. 1301.

⁴ P. 1308.

patronage, mediation, influence, power, or intercession of the blessed Virgin Mary.

Symmachus died A.D. 514.

CONCLUSION.

We have now brought to a close our proposed task, with regard to the worship of the Virgin Mary in the Church of Rome. We have seen that in that Church, prayer, unequivocal and direct, is now addressed to her for her intercession, and for her patronage, and assistance, and protection, and for temporal and spiritual graces. We have seen that God is petitioned to grant the requests of those who pray to Him, for the sake of the Virgin, through her merits and intercession. We have seen that spiritual praises are offered to her for past benefits, and hymns are sung to her glory. We have found that Christians are taught to depend upon her as the anchor of their souls, and to devote themselves by a solemn act of religion to her service, as the Queen of heaven and the Spouse of God.

The pattern, and principles, and fundamental ground of all this worship, we find fully and unquestionably existing in the appointed offices, the authorized and prescribed services of the Roman Ritual; while the excesses and extravagancies of the worship of the Virgin we see in the doctrinal and devotional works of her votaries, many of them being canonized saints and accredited teachers. It is not for us to accuse our brethren in the Church of Rome of idolatry or heresy; though in our own conscience we should ourselves be guilty of both, were we to associate any created being with Almighty God as the object of our prayer, or with our blessed Saviour as our mediator and intercessor. We condemn not others; to their own master they stand or fall; but being persuaded in our own mind that we should act in direct opposition to God's own teaching if we were to pray to the Virgin, or to pray to God in her name, pleading her advocacy

trusting to her merits, we at once protest against the fundamental errors of that Church which justifies, and enjoins, and requires, on pain of excommunication, such worship to be paid to the Virgin, as in our consciences we consider to invade the province of Almighty God, the Giver of all good, and the province of the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, the only Mediator between God and man.

To assure ourselves on these essential points, we have first searched the Holy Scriptures; and from the first to the last page we find not one iota or tittle to suggest, or sanction, or admit of divine worship being offered to the Virgin; but much every way to discountenance and forbid it. And to assure ourselves that we understand the inspired volume as our forefathers in Christ received it from the first; that what we hold on this point was the tenet of the primitive Church; and that what we dread as a fundamental error was introduced by the corruptions of superstition in more recent ages; we have examined to the utmost of our ability and means the remains of Christian antiquity. Especially have we searched into the writings of those whose works (A.D. 492) received the approbation of the pope and his council at Rome; we have also diligently sought for evidence in the records of the early councils; and we find all the genuine and unsuspected works of Christian writers, not for a few years, or in a portion of Christendom, but to the end of the first five hundred years and more, and in every country in the eastern and the western empire, in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia, testifying as with one voice that the writers and their contemporaries knew of no belief in the present power of the Virgin, and her influence with God; no practice in public or private of praying to God through her mediation, or of invoking her for her good offices of intercession, and advocacy, and patronage; no offering of thanks and praise made to her; no ascription of divine honour and glory to her name. On the con-

trary, all the writers through those ages testify that to the early Christians God was the only object of prayer; and Christ the only heavenly Mediator and Intercessor in whom they put their trust.

The revealed truths of the Bible, and the witnesses of the Christian Church warn us, as with a voice from heaven, never to substitute the Virgin for Christ, not even for a moment, not by the most transient appeal to God in her name; never to seek what we need as souls on our way to God, from any source but the Almighty, the first Cause of all things, the Giver of every good gift, the God of all comfort, the Rock of our salvation, the only Ground of our hope; and to pour out our hearts before Him, through his only Son alone, who is the way, the truth, and the life.

We honour the Virgin Mary, we love her memory, we would, by God's grace, follow her example in faith and humility, meekness and obedience; we bless God for the wonderful work of salvation, in effecting which she was a chosen vessel; we call her a blessed saint and a holy Virgin; we cannot doubt of her eternal happiness through the merits of Him who was "God of the substance of his Father before the world, and man of the substance of his mother born in the world." But we cannot address religious praises to her; we cannot trust in her merits, or intercession, or advocacy, for our acceptance with God; we cannot invoke her for any blessing, temporal or spiritual; we cannot pray to God through her intercession or for it. This in us would be sin. We pray to God alone; we offer religious praise, our spiritual sacrifices to God alone; we trust in God alone; we need no other mediator, we apply to no other mediator, intercessor, or advocate, in the unseen world, but Jesus Christ alone the Son of God and the Son of Man. In this faith, we implore God alone, for the sake only of his Son, to keep us sted fast unto death; and in the full assurance of the beli

that this faith is founded on the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, we will endeavour, by the blessing of the Eternal Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, to preserve the same faith, as our Church now professes it, whole and undefiled, and to deliver it down without spot or stain of superstition, to our children's children, as their best inheritance for ever.

THE END.

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